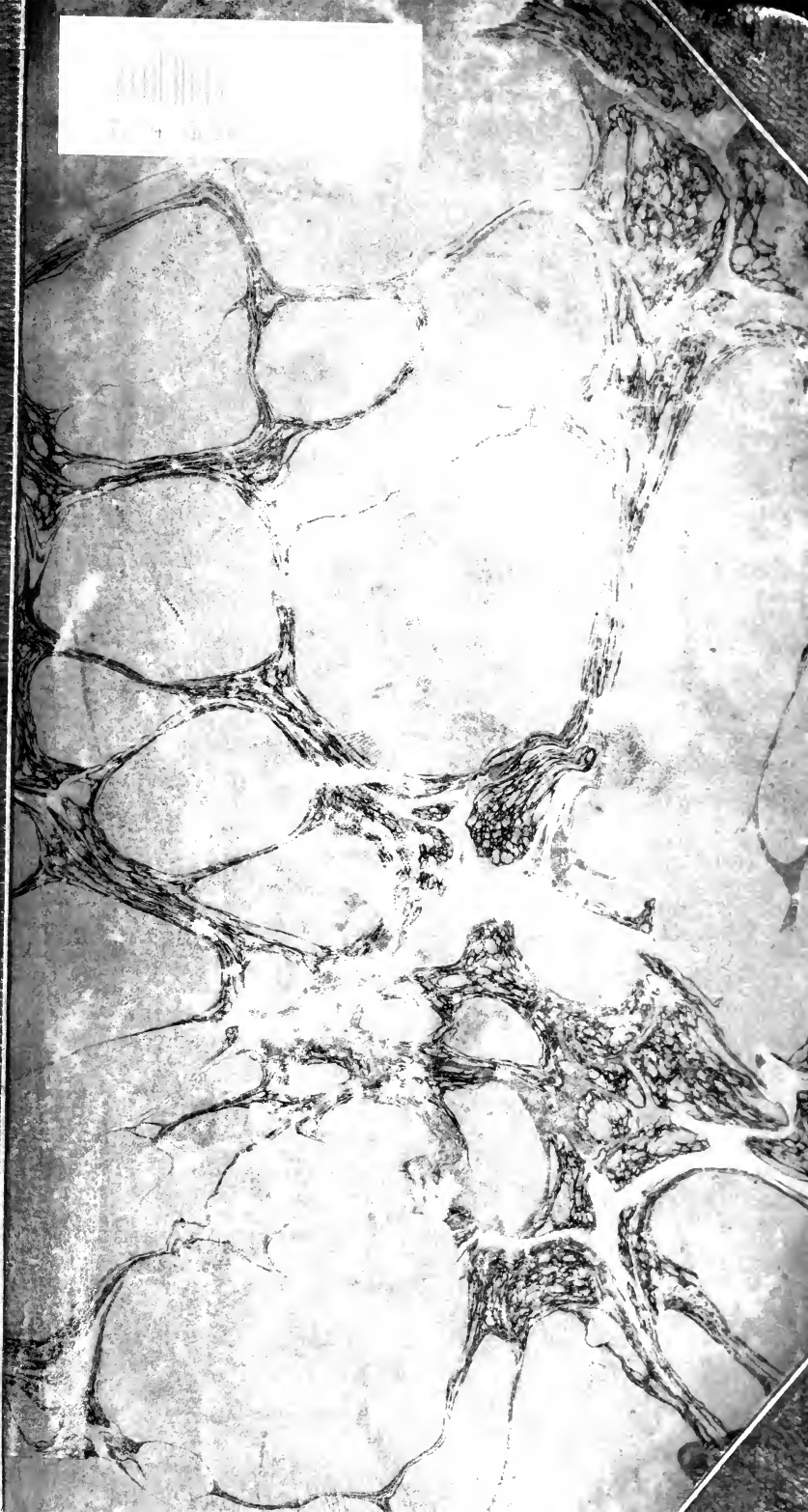
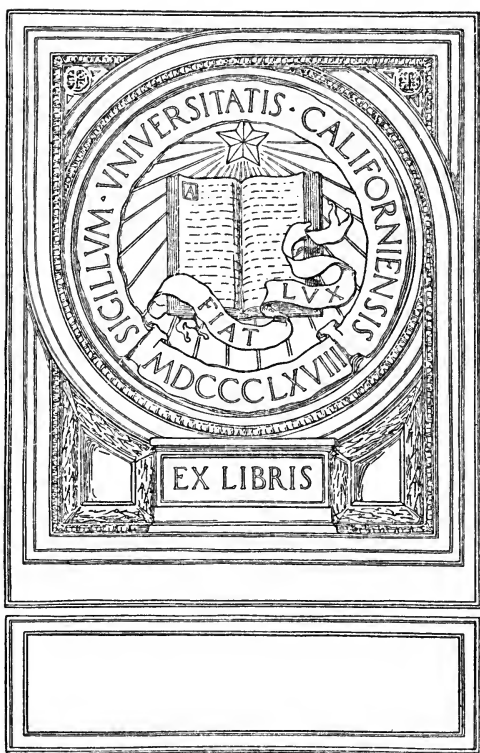
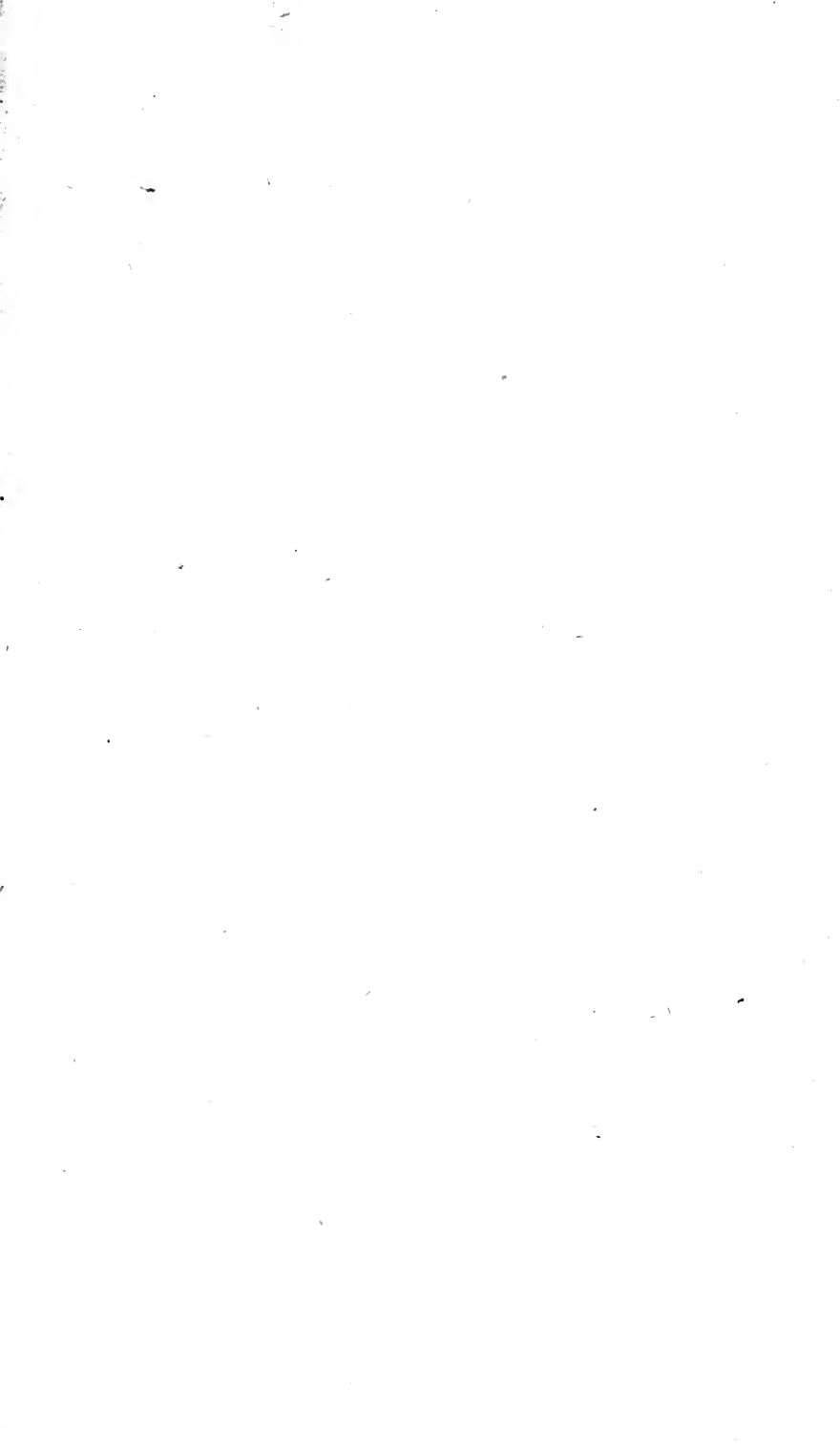


WILLIAMSON
1844





by Miss Stronge.
with
The Author's Compliments.



THE
TOUCH-STONE OF TRUTH;

UNITING
MR. SWIFT'S LATE CORRESPONDENCE

WITH
THE REV. DOCTOR DOBBIN,
AND HIS FAMILY;

AND
THE DETAILED ACCOUNT
OF
THEIR SUBSEQUENT CHALLENGE
AND IMPOSTURE.

THIRD EDITION:

ENLARGED WITH SEVERAL NEW REMARKS AND OBSERVATIONS.

By THEOPHILUS SWIFT, Esq.

Jubent renovare dolorem. VIRG.

Dublin:

1811.

1871

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

SEVERAL of my friends having kindly interested themselves in my late correspondence with the family to whom these papers refer; and having also requested me to furnish them with copies of it; I have been induced, in order to oblige them, and at the same time to justify myself to those whose good opinion I esteem and value, to direct a small edition of the Letters to be struck off. I found the labour of repeated transcripts immense, and not unoften attended with oscitancy and incorrectness. That inconvenience is removed by the fair and perfect copies now presented to my respected friends, before whom I judged it necessary to lay the entire of the correspondence; that by taking a comprehensive view of the whole, they might the better be enabled to draw a full and equitable conclusion.

Letters are their own expositors, and often speak more eloquently, and more to the purpose, than the best-written comment. For which reason, I shall only observe on the pre-

sent correspondence, that the Rev. Doctor Dobbin and his family are the subject of it ; that they refused in the most positive and pertinacious manner, to give up any of my numerous Letters to Miss Emily Dobbin ; those solemn documents, by which that Lady and myself had stood bound to each other in a Contract of *Prospective Marriage* ;—that although repeatedly called upon, they never once disavowed such Contract, or disputed its validity ; and, therefore, that their acquiescence and tenacious detention of the proofs, are strong admissions of their own to my claim on the Honor of Miss Dobbin ; and have established that claim in as perfect a manner as the production itself of the Contract could have done.* Though not the

* Doctor Dobbin, when pressed for a reason, why such resistance was made to the return of my Letters ? answered, “ Should Mr. Swift get possession of the Letters, he will avail himself of them, and publish.” It was not quite certain that I would ; but it shews how much he feared it. By this observation, however, he admits that advantage *could* be taken of the Letters ; and that their publication might disclose some unpleasant truth. What that truth was, there needs no ghost to tell us. They had discovered, that with the accidental copy of a solitary Letter, found among my papers,* I had made good the very thing they had studied to avoid—*My claim on the Honor of Miss Dobbin*. They had discovered also, that a second demonstration would be worse than the first. Yet, gifted as the family are allowed to be, with great Talents, both natural and acquired ; and challenged as I had been by one of them to a literary combat ; there was

* See *Appendix*, No. IV.

whole of my case, it forms an important part of it; and my friends are requested to keep it in their mind. I would not reproach the unhappy family, or bear hard upon them. Their unkindness I remit, and have no wish to revive it; or if revived it must be, in justification, only of my own honor, and I trust its yet unquestioned purity. *Haud ignarus mali*, I will not pay them in their own evil. The present Introduction hath no such object, being intended merely to throw such light on their deportment toward me, as may guide my friends to a clearer understanding of the matter con-

not found amongst them one *gifted* with the power of repelling the proofs adduced from that solitary Letter; or of resisting any one of the arguments I had employed as evidence of the Contract. They wisely therefore answered it by *Silence*: (see Letters IV. and V.) and in so doing gave a strong proof of their good understanding. Had they answered me with the Letters, and that I had confronted them with some of Miss Dobbin's own to myself—which yet they ought to have known I had too much honour to do—the veil would have been rent, and I had pinned them to the point. There was no middle way for them. *Now* indeed, they have not much to apprehend: I have voluntarily and honorably placed them beyond the reach of exposure, Miss Dobbin and myself having mutually cancelled our respective records of the Contract. An appeal therefore to her own Honor is all that is left me. That appeal I now solemnly make; and, should she ever cast her eye over this page, I ask *Herself*, What dependence hath any man upon the woman contracted to him, but her HONOR?

tained in the Correspondence. Had I conceived, indeed, that my Letters were destined to appear in their present form, or that they would ever have become an object of interest to my friends, I should have composed them in a fuller and more explicit manner ; but being wholly of a private nature, and addressed to those who were familiar with the circumstances, I had little necessity to be minute, or to travel out of the broad path. In some places, however, I have judged it expedient, for the better information of my friends, to cast into a note such explanations as the text seemed to require ; but of these I have been very sparing, being unwilling to draw the reader's attention from the Letters themselves, on which alone it is my wish that my friends should form their judgment. But at the end of some of the Letters, when the reader might be supposed to pause or reflect, I have ventured an occasional remark or two, either to illustrate some general fact, or to state an observation resulting from it.

And here I take the opportunity of requesting my respected friends to understand, that be the unkindness what it may that I have received from the family, nothing contained in these papers is intended to express the slightest disrespect toward the Lady, who for so many years had possessed my entire confidence and esteem, and for whom I had entertained the most exalted affection.

I have likewise to add, that on an attentive perusal of the Letters, my friends will have the goodness to observe, that in a perilous and pitiless voyage of conflicting elements, *Fidelity* had been my Compass; and that through a long and cheerless night of sorrow and darkness, I had steered my course by the light of her guiding Star. It is hoped also they will see, that when I resigned Miss Dobbin to another, I sacrificed in that resignation every strong and every tender feeling of my heart; all my long-encouraged hopes, and long-cherished affections; all my claims to her confidence; all my demands upon her honor; all my prior pretensions; and all my own peace to that of her beseeching family, who yet had treated me with such unmerited disrespect, but whom it had now pleased Heaven to visit with a sore and bitter affliction. These considerations, it is hoped, will satisfy my friends, that in my very resignation of her, I had been faithful to Miss Dobbin; and to the last hour of my handing her over to Mr. Lefanu, that my Affection had endured unimpaired, and my Honor continued unimpeached.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN the former Introduction I had occasion more than once to use the word *Contract*: but as that word will frequently recur in these papers, and as some objections have lately been made to it, my friends are requested to observe, that such word is not intended to denote the species of contract which courts of law entertain, or that which common parlance has rendered familiar. Had I fifty contracts of the sort, they should sleep for ever in my drawer, before I would produce them in any court, and least of all in a *Court of Honor*. Terms are the tools of an author, and their use consists in his application of them. When, therefore, I use the term *Contract*, I would be understood to mean that *Honorable* obligation which the *Honorable* respect, and by which the *Honorable* are bound. In my first letter to Mr. Lefanu, where the occasion called upon me to be explicit, I so explained myself: "You would find, sir, that I had been for several years *bound in an Honorable obligation of marriage to Miss Emily Dobbin*." And again in the same letter, "Urging that *Honorable*

obligation," &c.:—"My long and strong claims upon her *Honor*."—And I will urge that honorable obligation, and I will ever urge my long and strong claims upon her honor. Honor speaks a language of its own, and is confined to no forms: it addresses itself to the *Heart*, whose eloquence it echoes. The *Heart* repeats it; and each, as by consent, understands the other.

What in my first letter I had termed *Honorable*, in my second to the same gentleman I call *Solemn*. "As it might be supposed," says the letter, "that I had broken the *Solemn* engagement into which I had entered with her." In both the principle is the same: for that which is honorable amongst men, must necessarily be solemn; and that which is solemn, must as necessarily be respected. I was writing to a clergyman as well as to a gentleman, and I used the language familiar to the respective characters. The picture of Truth sacrificing to the Muses, is beautiful: that of Morality attiring Religion, would be sublime: the Graces adorning Emily with the lillies of Candor, would unite both, and form an highly interesting combination. Her fine imagination will improve the allegory; her correct judgment will apply its moral; and her uninfluenced conduct will determine what is *Honorable*.

The same letter says, "As Miss Dobbin had formed a second Engagement before she had cancelled her first." *Engagement* here, as in the passage quoted above, is but another word for *Obligation*: with the *honorable* mind, an engagement of marriage and its obligation are the same; and both, with the same *honorable* mind, imply *Contract*. In the code of a gentleman, they are convertible terms; and he who would distinguish them, possesses, in *my* mind, neither the ideas nor the feelings of one. The dryness of his definitive faculties might provoke my smile; but I would not trust such a man with the custody of my honor.

No one, it is presumed, will doubt the affection I bear Miss Dobbin: herself will be the last to question it: but I would not exchange the intelligent bond by which she holds my heart, the fine confidence that her favour had inspired, or the delicate hope that I had drawn from the graciousness of her correspondence, for the most conclusive contract that ever bound man or woman. I should disdain to argue it; I should blush to exhibit technical evidence of her favor! If Honor cannot bind, what human restraint can controul? And if it could, what honorable man would regard it? Or who could esteem the woman to whom he was bound only by a coarse obligation? The word *Contract*,

therefore, I restore to its pure and primitive meaning ; and I call it that “ Honorable Bond which rises superior to the cold definition of the schools ; but which cultivated minds, such as Miss Dobbin’s confessedly is, unhesitatingly acknowledge.” On that Honorable Bond I take my stand ; and shall continue to insist on its binding obligation, as often as I hear its solemnity contested.

In my letter, indeed, of the 22d. of July, addressed to her father, and in the sixth of the questions that follow below, and perhaps in one or two other places that bear upon the letter ; when I apply the word *Contract*, I give it a more extended construction. To explain myself. That letter abounds with quotations from another letter which I had written to Miss Dobbin, and with arguments founded on those respective quotations. (*see Letter IV*) Most certainly in many places of the letter I did mean, and would now be understood to mean, a strong and virtual Contract, broadly implied, and obvious to the most uneducated mind. The same may be said of the sixth question, which refers to that letter. But I disregard any contract that is not *Honorable*, any obligation to which *Honor* hath not affixed its seal.

Having made these observations, it is with pain I find myself compelled to enlarge farther on the nature and import of the contract in question. But since the first publication of this tract, report has busily said, that Miss Dobbin declares she had never favoured my addresses.

Such is my respect for this excellent lady, and such my high opinion of her worth, that I am unwilling to believe the report to have originated with herself. I must impute it, therefore, to the zeal of those officious but mistaken friends, whose counsels have proved so injurious to her. If however, they would be her friends, let them answer the following questions; “or else,” in the language of the marriage ceremony itself, “hereafter for ever hold their peace.”

1st. What was the reason, that they deferred their denial of Miss Dobbin having honored me with her favor, until after that lady and myself had mutually extinguished the records of our correspondence?

2d. What was the reason, that Miss Dobbin preserved my letters with so much care, and burthened her Escritoire with them for so many years,* if she had set no value on them? Was it because she had never favored the writer?

3d. What was the reason, that upon the unequivocal avowal of my affection and its

* See *Appendix*, No. I.

honorable object, as declared and set forth in my letter to her of the 5th. of September, 1804, the same which I told her father, I had that evening put into her hand at Mrs. Lefanu's— (*see letter IV.*) What was the reason that after such affectionate avowal, Miss Dobbin continued to correspond with me for the space of *several weeks*? Was it because she was not favoring my addresses?

4th. What was the reason, that on the late conflagration of my letters, Miss Dobbin took care to inform me she had that day, viz. November, 29th, destroyed *this particular letter*?

5th. What was the reason, that when I appealed to a confidential letter which I had written her in March, 1807, for the proofs of her favor and encouragement;* that when I stated such letter to be at that very time in Miss Dobbin's own possession, and urged its strong and prompt obligation;—What was the reason, that Miss Dobbin's possession of the letter was not denied? And what the reason that its obligation was not questioned?

6th. What was the reason, that these Reporters *waited* till the Document in question had been destroyed, before they gave out that I had never been honored with Miss Dobbin's

* For these proofs see, *passim*, Letter to Doctor Dobbin, Letter IV.

favor? Was not the proper time for disowning the contract, when the reference to it was fresh, and its obligation pressed home? And was not *that* also the proper time for discrediting and disclaiming altogether both the contract itself and its possession with Miss Dobbin, had they not been conscious she had encouraged my addresses, and that the proofs of her favor at that very moment flashed them in the face? The solution of the question is not difficult. They knew I myself had likewise the possession of Letters THEN, whose production might embarrass their denial, should they provoke or defy me to it. And they had treated me with so much disrespect, they could not tell but that in my indignance I might put the *unquestionable argument*. True, indeed, nothing could have forced me on a proof so ungallant and dishonorable: for I would have burned, as I told Miss Dobbin's confidential friend, *my two hands to the stumps*, sooner than allow human eye to inspect a line of her letters, without her authority and permission. But they knew not the honor of my heart, which they seem to have measured by a standard of their own: and the apprehension entertained by her father, that should I once get possession of the Documents, I might be induced to employ them in a way not very agreeable to their wishes, will account for their caution *then*, as it accounts for their denial *now*.

7th. What was the reason, they should so frequently have proclaimed and boasted, that Emily was in possession of innumerable avowals of my affection and promises of marriage, had nothing of the sort subsisted between us, or that I had not been favored by her? *see Letter IV.*

8th. What was the reason, that they caused Miss Dobbin to hold over her answer to my affectionate letter for the space of five months; that is, from the second of June to the twentieth of November, before she was allowed to acknowledge it? And what was the reason that she told me then, what she had never told me before, that “she *positively* declined my proposal?” Strange, that the Honor of an Honorable Lady was not suffered to act for itself! Strange, that others should take the management of it into their own hands!

9th. What was the reason, that when she *positively* declined the Proposal, she did not *positively* decline the Contract? Had I not for several months been urging its claim upon her? And what fairer opportunity could have offered for silencing that claim, had she not felt its *positive* obligation?

10th. What was the reason, that when she composed that ingenious letter, the same inge-

nulty could not draw from the Documents—they were then in her possession—one solitary argument, one poor inference, either to confound the Contract, or to stagger its authority? Was it out of regard to her own Honor, or from tenderness for mine, that her delicacy omitted to touch the subject?*

11th. What was the reason, that when, on her own confidential friend intimating a wish to examine her letters, I told that friend I should have pleasure in submitting them to his inspection, provided I had the leave of Miss Dobbin;—What was the reason, that although I made her two different applications for the purpose,† Miss Dobbin declined to permit the favor?

12th. Above all, these forward Reporters are called upon to assign their reasons, that as I had ceased to press upon Miss Dobbin the obligation of the Contract in which she had stood bound to me;—that as I had renounced to Mr. Lefanu my anterior claims upon her

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* See *Appendix*, No. II.

† Viz. One on the 10th. the other on the 21st. of November. The destruction of the correspondence, as we have seen, did not take place till the 29th of the same month.

Honor, and of my own spontaneous grace had resigned her to him;—and that as in my answer to her affecting letter, as well as in the two letters which I afterward wrote to Mr. Lefanu, I had left her then, as I leave her now, unclaimed and unobstructed;—I ask these Agitators, what is the reason that they *disturb the question* NOW? and *why they take such pains to evade a Contract which stands no longer in their way?*

Miss Dobbin has now had an impartial trial by her *Peers*, twelve *fair* Questions. Until these shall be severally and sufficiently resolved, her Reporters would do well to discontinue their denial that she had honored me with her favor.

When Documents are destroyed, and destroyed too by mutual agreement, that party comes with an awkward grace into court, who disputes their original existence, and affects to forget their solemn obligation. Had they not existed, they could not have been destroyed; and their very destruction, by *interchanged assent*, is at once proof of their value, and evidence of their validity. No Truth so stubborn as fact fortified by *Circumstances*; and these will always have authority with the sober and reflecting part of mankind. They will continue, when fugacious declarations pass away as lightly as the winds that waft them.

The industry of the family in denying that I had been favored by Miss Dobbin, and the zeal of their Deputies in propagating that denial, have rendered it necessary to my own justification, that I should be somewhat more circumstantial and specific than hitherto I had been, or in kindness had intended to be. Let them remember I but stated facts, and had left their own Letters to discredit or confirm them. Those facts spoke for themselves, and every one might draw his own inference. But since they oblige me to speak out, and to be explicit with them, they must stand to all consequences ; and I now assert in broad and express terms, that the Encouragement I had received from Miss Dobbin, and her present Contract with Mr. Lefanu, are at open variance ; and that she had been forced by her family into a most high and flagrant Breach of Faith. This Breach of Faith, as I told Mr. Lefanu, no silence of mine could solder ; and I now tell both Him and Her, no language of mine can enflame, and the pen of no moralist excuse it.

Her detention of my letters after the avowed and acknowledged terms, on which it was understood between us that she might retain them, I considered, and those friends who knew the circumstance then considered, as a positive and unequivocal Compact. These terms I had ex-

plained to her in a confidential letter ; and I stated expressly, that whenever the "*Subsequent Period*" should arrive, she would find me faithful, and ready to give her a proof of "my immutable affection*."—The *Subsequent Period* arrived :—But when I expected the honorable performance of the condition, on which she had preserved "the memorials," as I phrased it, of my affection and fidelity, I received from her family not only resistance, but insult : While those who had caused her to break her faith, now say, that she had never held out any encouragement, or had entered into any prospective union with me !

Had it not been the intention of Miss Dobbin to perform the condition on which she retained the memorials of my fidelity, I would ask that correct Lady what *honorable* motive induced her to keep them ? Or what construction can be put on her careful detention and preservation of these memorials, except that of favor and encouragement ?

The letter that explained the terms, on which she might retain the numerous proofs I had given her of my "immoveable resolution,"

* Or, as the Letter in another place more fully expressed it, "That proud pre-eminence which you possess in the fondest and sincerest heart that ever warmed the human breast."

as I then called it, never to forsake her, was dated March 19, 1807; and arose out of that other confidential letter of the fifth of September 1804, which I had put into her hand at Mrs. Lefanu's. Among other objects, the letter was intended to renew and strengthen the solemn avowals of my honorable affection and fidelity, as expressed in the former confidential letter. The one was but the echo of the other, and the last the confirmation of the first. Was then her Correspondence with me for the space of *several weeks* after her reception of that first confidential letter, no Encouragement? And was her reservation of that very letter, among all my other affectionate communications, as *conditioned* in my letter of March, neither favoring my addresses, nor cherishing my hopes? What Splitter of conscience will assert that they were not? What Dissector of honor will stand up, and laying his hand upon his heart, will aver, that in such Explanations and such Conditions nothing *prospective* was implied? And that in the Breach of these conditions, no Faith, no Honor have been violated?

I would not, however, arraign the Honor of Miss Dobbin. *Left to herself*, there remains not a doubt of her Honorable intent. Her gracious reception of my letter, when pre-

sented to her by the Lady on the morning of the third of June, is strong evidence of her favor; and it proves also that her intention then was honorable. I impeach not, therefore, the Honor of the unoffending Emily: but I question that of the Individual, who had dictated, without her knowledge, the disrespectful answer that was sent me in July; which disrespectful answer gave birth both to the unfortunate Correspondence that followed, and to the necessity of its publication afterward. *Hoc fonte derivata clades.* And I further charge that same Individual with inducing Emily to postpone Her own answer, till *Circumstances should render it expedient to send one.* Do they require an Explanation? If they do, I shall not be found sleeping on my post.

Again I must repeat my earnest hope, that my friends will do me the great justice to believe, that neither by the questions I have proposed, nor by any new observations that I have offered, it had been my object—sure I am it was far, very far from my heart—to disparage the Honor of the virtuous Lady, to whom they refer; or to wound by one offending word the Excellence I so regard and esteem. True it is, that for the peace of her family, by whose counsels she had been guided, and to whose wishes she had submitted, I did resign her to

Mr. Lefanu : but it is equally true, I did not resign my Honor ; or surrender my privilege of discussing any question that should affect it. And I am the more particular on this head, because it has been *reported*, that when I sent my last letter to Miss Dobbin, I had made her a promise that I would not publish any thing on the present subject. I MADE NO SUCH PROMISE. The promise I made was, that I would not publish certain "Memoirs" then in the press, lest it should obstruct her marriage with Mr. Lefanu, to whom I had just then resigned her. Those Memoirs exist no more. The flames have extinguished them ; and I hope I shall not be under the necessity of reviving them in a new shape.

It is also *reported*, that I had promised not to write to Mr. Lefanu. I MADE NO SUCH PROMISE. I promised, indeed, to suppress *The letter which had failed to be delivered*. Miss Dobbin understands me. Like the Memoirs, *that* letter exists no more. But I did not undertake, that should her friends deceive me, first, by representing her as going to be married to Mr. Lefanu ; and then, when they had accomplished their point, and secured my acquiescence, by disowning that intimation, and signifying it was not to HIM she was going to be married :—I say, I did not undertake that

I would not apply to Œdipus for a solution of the riddle. What Sphinx had artfully involved, the candor of Mr. Lefanu expounds; *Sphingos iniquæ ambages resolvit*; and if he solicited my silence, he did not equivocate to procure it. To their own disingenuousness, then, and their own ambiguous intimations, they owe the application I had the honor to make him. The *suppressed* letter was cautionary; and had been composed in the form of an Admonition, advising Mr. Lefanu that I had a Contract with Miss Dobbin antecedent to his own, and should assert that Contract against any other he might set up. But the letters I *did* send him, were exactly the reverse: they were inquisitorial: they were permissory: they were induced by Miss Dobbin's own letter to myself, which had moved me to resign her to him. And when I promised her confidential friend not to publish the "Memoirs," that would have wounded her feelings, and might have injured her preferment with Mr. Lefanu, I did not undertake to suppress a "Correspondence" that should expose the insults of her family, and leave her to marry the Gentleman which had been managed for her.*

To conclude. I do insist, and whilst I have a finger to command a pen, I shall never cease to insist, that under the implied Contract Miss

* See Appendix, No. III.

Dobbin was bound, I do not say in *Law*, for I know she was not ;—but in *Honor*, in strong and imperative *Honor*, I do insist that she was bound to have married me ; and to have resisted the addresses of Mr. Lefanu, let those addresses *have come in what shape they might*. This I shall continue to repeat and proclaim as often as her *Reporters* shall call into question the solemn Obligation by which she had bound herself to me.

Had the Misrepresenters of Miss Dobbin less busily denied that I had been favored by her, they would have rendered the present Introduction unnecessary. Or had I myself in the first Edition been more explicit with them, which from motives of delicacy only I had declined to be, they had not perhaps afforded me this new occasion to examine their conduct. In kindness I had preferred an insufficient detail to a painful explanation ; and I do still hope they will not compel me to a more minute discussion of a subject, that has redounded so little either to their Credit or to their Honor.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

CONCERNING the third Edition of a work which has been honored by my friends with so much of their kindness and partiality, it will be expected that something should be offered by way of Preface or Introduction.

Since the publication of the former Editions, two circumstances have occurred to render the present somewhat more interesting than those which preceded it:—A *Challenge*, and a *Marriage*.—Of the first an account had been given separately, in a work bearing that Title: but forming a material link in the great chain, it is here re-published in a connected manner, as part of that uniform System on which the Doctor and his family had acted toward me.

On the subject of Miss Dobbin's marriage I shall not detain my friends: but it is necessary they should be informed, that for some time prior to that Event, I had entirely extruded her from my heart. It will scarcely, however, be imputed to me, that after the numerous proofs which I had given for so many years of inviolable Fidelity, I should capriciously and lightly renounce her; or that I should all at once withdraw my Esteem, without good and sufficient cause. This were to invert the laws both of

Nature and of Reason; and even to suppose Virtue a shadow, and Honor indeed a bubble! My friends, by whom alone I would be judged, will not believe it of me. The marriage of Miss Dobbin did not take place till the last day of July; but under the seal whose confidence they had broken, her whole family had *discovered*, that so early as the fifth of June, I had declared her "undeserving of my affection." (*See Letter XIV.*) For this sudden change Miss Dobbin and her Reporters may suggest any motive they think proper. Alike indifferent to their good or their ill opinion of me, I shall not stop to argue its morality with them.

The numerous applications of my friends not having left a single copy remaining to me of the old Editions, and being almost daily called on by some acquaintance or stranger to favor them with one, a new impression has been rendered necessary. In this impression the detached parts of the work, which had been separately published, are united, and the whole thrown into regular order; with such additional remarks and explanations as the subject seemed to require. But I have been particularly careful not to burthen my friends with any long or unnecessary observations; or if with any long one, with the note only in page 29, and one other, being the fourth number of the *Appendix*; which, however, is the place allotted both by custom and convenience to all such extended Expositions.

But although I have much pleasure in publishing the present Edition for the use and accommodation of my friends, I confess that I have a private satisfaction also. It serves to remove an objection which might possibly be made, That so long as Miss Dobbin remained unmarried, I had continued to publish; but that as soon as she had married, I had ceased to print. And this satisfaction is not lessened by the consideration, that it cannot be inferred by any ingenuity of Malice, that I publish from Disappointment *now*; having long before recreantly fled the field, when I declined the challenge of her Champion, and refused to “erect a new “reputation for her.” (*See Letter XIV.*) With this impression of my long-previous and unchivalrous Repudiation* of her, it is requested that my friends will read the *present* Edition.

Strong, however, and many as my inducements are for presenting my friends with this new edition, I stand *bound* to publish. A Lady who is to make a distinguished figure in these pages, has imperatively required it of me;—the fair *Fitz-David*. Deeming her first letter not sufficiently insulting, she follows it with a

* With *Chremes* in the Comedy, but for reasons somewhat more serious, I exclaim, “*Recte ego has fugi nuptias.*” *Terent. Andr. Act IV. Sc. iv.*

second;* and abusing Providence for the years his goodness had extended to me, threatens to cut them short “ for the peace of the Dobbin “ family.” I am to be sent into “ the world of “ Spirits,” having to dread “ the resentment of “ a Protector NOW, who will terminate the affair

* This second letter of the kind-hearted Lady I feel concerned that I cannot give entire to my friends, as it might be imputed to me, that from motives of vanity I had published the very flattering, and in some places not inelegant compliments which She condescends to bestow on my “ Genius and “ Talents.” That I may, not, however, be charged with a worse motive, and of wilfully suppressing those parts of her letter in which her *Consistence* be-spatters me, I shall cull a few of her Classic Flowers, as a present to my friends. At this season of the year they may not be found unacceptable.

Of Jonson Dryden has finely observed, that he may be tracked in the Snow of Plautus and Terence: and of Miss Fitz-David, it may be said with equal truth, that she may be tracked in the Mire of their Cousin James.—“ The folly “ and madness of a man on the Verge of the Grave, having “ the presumption to pretend to the heart of a person so much “ your Junior.”—This is quite Cousin James; we track her in his *Snow*.—“ You are a worthless Character.”—Cousin James told me so before, but in language somewhat more coarse and homely.—“ You are deranged.”—So I could have told her, are well known to be certain “ Individuals of a “ family,” whom She would be very sorry that I should name.—“ You are in your second Childhood.”—So I was, when I proved for seven years my fidelity to an undeserving woman.—“ You are called The Knight of the Snow white Locks.” Here again we track her in the *Snow* of Cousin James, who had told me before that I was *hoary*: but the Gibe is not new; for we know that *little children* had mocked, and said “ Go up, Thou Bald Head! Go up, Thou Bald Head!”—“ Do not flatter yourself your Old Age and its concomitant infirmities will defend you.”—Cousin James

“ more seriously than I had imagined.” ———
Heu, me miserum !—This is the third challenge I have received from the infatuated family ; one of them expressly from a Sister of Miss Dobbin, who offered to fight by Proxy, as Ghosts in armour *territate* with their Shadows.

Dí te eradicent : ita me miserum territas !

Terent.

had given me a proof that these should be no protection to me. Between Cousin James and Miss Fitz-David there appears a striking *affinity* ; and they stand committed in the good old Proverb, “ If the one be in the Mud, the other is “ in the Mire.”

One thing, however, for whose truth we have the authority of Miss Fitz-David, gives me real satisfaction ; and I had rather be charged with Vanity, than that the circumstance should not be known. After some courteous compliments to my pen, which, she is pleased to tell me, might have been employed in a manner more useful to the world, and in immortalizing my own name instead of that of Miss Dobbin, she adds, “ Your writings have held her up to the *admiration of the world* : but for them, her Virtues would have been “ buried in obscurity, or known only to those who had the “ happiness of being *acquainted with her*.”—I rejoice with Miss Fitz-David and the other friends of Miss Dobbin, that any humble effort of mine should have drawn forth the Virtues of this obscure Lady, and added a Cubit to her Stature : But as Miss Fitz-David confidently assures us, that those who know Miss Dobbin find *happiness in her acquaintance*, we are bound to conclude that herself is one of that number, and familiar with her Virtues. Should this be true, it follows of course that Miss Dobbin has the *happiness of knowing Miss Fitz-David* : we have the best authority for it. This accounts for the Cake, and for the Letter also with which it was accompanied. Those, therefore, who give out that the family were unacquainted with the writer, will have some difficulty to prove that they were not privy to the insult.

Like the Finglasian Thalestris, the pistols of whose near and dear relations were to muzzle me, unless I should muzzle *myself*, the formidable Fitz-David with her puissant Protector is to *terminate* me, and pop me into the world of Spirits, should I not submit to dishonorable silence!—*Sic notus Ulysses?*—What cause did I ever give the assuming family to suppose, that I would allow them to controul the motions of my pen, or would repress the folds of my lips at the sound of their Mandate? From their long experience of me, they knew very well, that I was not to be scared into compliance; and that to their “Knight of the snow-white locks” no argument had been so persuasive as a *Threat*. The menace, therefore, of the fair Fitz-David I receive as a Command; and in obedience to that Command, I publish.

Meanwhile, I desire Miss Cæcilia (for so she subscribes her baptismal name, which in her extreme haste to communicate the Tidings of Miss Dobbin’s marriage, she had forgot to do in her first letter) will have the goodness to acquaint the new Family-Champion—I beg pardon, their NOW Protector—that I have an odd mode of regarding a Threat; and that in defiance of the Mination held out to me, I shall defend my Honor whenever Malice or Perfidy shall call it into question.

An Author, with whose text the family of a Clergyman should be better acquainted than myself, hath laid it down for a maxim, that "In the multitude of Counsellors there is safety." (Prov. XV.) Were we not bound to receive it for a truth, we might be apt to exclaim "How unfavored that family, how inauspiciously distinguished, whom Providence taketh out of its rule, and in the multitude of whose Counsellors there is danger!"—With the possession of talents which might have rendered them prosperous and respected, they want the wisdom to be wise; and with all the fatality of experience, are doomed, inevitably doomed to err, and be unfortunate!

So much fresh matter had mixed itself in this new Edition, which embraces the whole that has been published, from my first letter to Miss Dobbin to the Oblation of the Bridal Cake, that I found it necessary to change the original title of the "Recent Correspondence" &c. and to call it by another more comprehensive, "The Touch-stone of Truth." For a like reason, I have changed the former motto of

"In tasks so bold can *little men* engage,
And in *soft bosoms* dwells such mighty rage?"

for one more appropriate to the miserable counsels that actuate the unhappy family, and have induced this new Exhibition of them,

Jubent renovare dolorem. VIRG.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

TOUCH-STONE, &c.

LETTER I.

Mr. Swift to Miss Emily Dobbin.

Dorset-street, Circular-road, June. 2, 1810.

MADAM.

TO have incurred your displeasure, was the heaviest misfortune that could befall me ; to regain your favor, would be the pride and the happiness of my life.

If I have greatly offended, I have likewise greatly suffered. Those sufferings I do not plead in extenuation of my conduct ; but let them, I beseech you, mitigate your resentment, and atone, in some measure, for the pain I have caused you. It is the only offering I have to make ; yet, humble as it is, your goodness can give it value, and animate Pythagoras's sacrifice.

Much as I have angered you, I have angered myself more : for I have not attained that perfection of philosophy, whose wisdom is too sturdy to own a weakness, and too proud to drop a tear over wounded or departed friendship. Yet, Madam, I respect Truth ; and dear as you are to me, and bitterly as I have bled, that Truth

compels me to say, I would hazard your displeasure a second time, with all its pains and penalties, sooner than I would steal into your favour, or take any bye-path to preserve it. Had I deceived you, had I dissembled, I might still have retained your good opinion—*without deserving it*; but then I should have wronged myself, and violated that morality to which you deemed me a stranger. I could not avoid loving you; but I could avoid being an hypocrite. To shun the semblance, I lost the substance; I lost your good opinion, and your friendship vanished with it. If, however, I had loved you with hypocrisy, how should I now approach you in sincerity, or what confidence could I deserve or expect? Ah, Madam, you will not severely judge me. The fine ingenuousness of your own nature will plead for me at the tribunal of your forgiving breast; and the dignity of your cultivated mind will acquit me of motives as repugnant to my general habits and principles, as to those virtuous studies which at all times have been my pursuit;—studies, Madam, that adorn yourself with so much lustre, and teach the hearts of other to admire you.

Allow me then, to hope, you will think less unkindly of me; and humbly to request, that should such old-fashioned morality not offend,

you will restore me to peace by drawing a veil over that which I have done. To repeat it, is beyond my power: and had I that power, I would lay down the life I but value for your sake, rather than give you a moment's disquiet. In the ambitious pursuit of happiness, if it was my misfortune to err, that error was not stained by any crime of the heart, nor polluted by one unworthy or disrespectful sentiment. But where is the virtue that is at all times correct? or the wisdom that has never been foolish? Your goodness then will not always abhor the sorrowing offender that sues to your feeling heart, and would personally supplicate its forgiveness. Were I the lowest of your domestics, as I am the humblest of your servants, you would not deny me this favor, or refuse to let me hear you pronounce my pardon. It is less poetical than true, that from the scotched serpent there goeth forth a balm, whose sympathy attracts its severed parts, and unites them as before. The balm of your goodness is equally healing, and can as easily reconcile a division which, I am very certain, hath no other property of the serpent in it.

You may have closed your door against me; but you cannot have shut your heart against the charities which soften and ennoble human nature; and which, dear Madam, when the

violences of the world have driven them from man, fly naturally to your sex for protection. If you had an enemy, that enemy would allow the kindness of your heart, and I will never believe that its resentments are eternal.

Whatever may have been my offences, a want of candor formed no part of them. With the same sincerity, I repeat the same tale of ardent and unalterable affection. That sincerity, it is hoped, can no longer offend; yet should you still disregard it, you can never take from me the proud privilege of respecting you, nor obliterate the dear recollection that I once had been honored with your friendship.* These, Madam, neither Time nor Chance, though they happen to all men, can destroy. With my knowlege of you my esteem began, and only with my latest breath it will expire. Though not quite so ancient as Jacob, with the patriarch I may say, “Seven years have I served Laban’s younger daughter, the fair, the beautiful Rachel:—” “In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and the sleep departed from mine eyes; yet they seemed to me but a few days for the love I bare unto her.”

* In the original draught of the Letter from whence I now transcribe, it was *Confidence*. Over it my pen is drawn, and the word *Friendship* interlined. But *Confidence* being a word which her family would soon have construed into an unfavourable allusion, from motives both of policy and respect I changed it for one less exceptionable, *Friendship*.

With all ingenuousness then, but with all respect, I once more entreat your permission that I may wait upon you, not only, Madam, to beseech your pardon and obtain your forgiveness, but to lay at you feet an heart bleeding with affection ;—an affection that hath never varied, for it is the nature of truth to be always the same. Could it have been added to, it had not been perfect ; and could it have been diminished, it had not been sincere. With Honor I have loved, I have cherished you in my heart ; and with Honor shall retain, whilst I *have* an heart, the same sentiments of esteem for you.

I have not sought the intercession of friends, or solicited mediation. Favors thus procured are seldom attended with satisfaction, and never with sincerity. Like the forced flower, they have their day, but want the sustaining sun to cheer and quicken them. To be valuable, the concession should be voluntary : its spontaneity is its worth ; without it, I should but distress you, and deceive myself.

No Madam, I will not distress you : never again will I offend or give you pain ; and that I may observe my word, I shall not trespass longer on your goodness, but close this exuberant transcript of my heart, in the hope you will allow me to evince that honorable affection toward you, which a late event enables me now to demonstrate.

May I hope, Madam, after what I have said you will not be displeased with this address ; but that you will have the kindness to let me hear from you ? For though I should be so unfortunate as to meet your disapprobation, it would be some little consolation to me that you had deemed me not unworthy of your attention. At all events, I shall wait your pleasure with the most agitated suspense.

In the meanwhile, Madam, I entreat you will believe that I have the honor to be, with all possible respect and truth, your most affectionate and most faithful

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

The foregoing Letter requires some little explanation ; and my friends should be informed, that not ignorant of the jealousy with which I had been regarded by some of Miss Dobbin's relations, I endeavoured to render it as little offensive to *them*, as courteous to *herself*. Had I been certain that the Letter would not have been submitted to their inspection, before she had honored me with her own answer, I should have written her one not less affectionate, indeed, or less respectful, but one of a firmer and more confidential nature ; not less strong than that which I had written her about three years before, in March, 1807. Which Letter I am induced from many circumstances to think, she had withheld from her family ; and that they

knew nothing of it, until it was pressed by myself on the notice of her father, in my Letter to him of the 22d. of July, (*see Letter IV.*) It was not possible, however, to keep the Contract so entirely out of sight that nothing should be found to bear upon it; as where I say, "Seven years have I served Laban's younger daughter:"—"My affection hath never varied, for it is the nature of Truth to be always the same:"—"With *Honor* I have loved, I have cherished you in my heart:"—"Allow me to evince that honorable affection toward you, which a *Late Event* enables me NOW to demonstrate:"—"Your most affectionate and most FAITHFUL," &c. &c. These were unavoidable allusions, and could not be dispensed with. Reference of *some* sort I soon found essential to the Letter. It eternally offered itself to my pen. The difficulty was to throw it into shade; and when I could not do *that*, to gild it. I had the whole family to contend with, of whose "*deter-mined*" hostility her own father did afterward assure me. (*See Letter V.*) The Trout was to be tickled: they must *all* be courted, or the facilities of her gentle heart (the only fault she possesses, but arising from its own excess of goodness) would yield to *their* authority. But without one friend in the family, like Sisyphus in the fable, I was to heave the huge round stone up the high hill; which was destined to be rolled down again with more impetuosity than it ascended. At such a moment the mention

of the Contract had been fatal to my hopes, and had thrown me back into my old situation. I dreaded the remotest allusion to it.

With the single exception of a Letter I had formerly written to the fair object of my affection, the present was the only one I had ever found it difficult to compose. It cost me a whole morning, and I was dissatisfied with it afterward. But I knew it would be time enough to resort to the Contract, when I should be driven to it. It came too soon upon me. In my first Letter to her father I am compelled not only to notice it, but to insist at large on its performance. This, however, carrying the appearance of force, I drop the Contract, assume a new character, turn suppliant, and address him as the father of "his and my beloved Emily;" "humbly beseeching his permission to *renew* my affectionate addresses," &c. It was my interest to court, not to compel; to soften, not to inflame. To the whole therefore of the foregoing Letter I strove to give the air and cast of an original proposal; *that* being more likely to succeed than any retrospective reference.

After this explanation, should my friends have observed any mystery, or apparent inconsistency in the frame or texture of the Letter, they will set it down to the account of the embarrassing situation in which I stood; where it was next to impossible that I should please the only one whom I had studied to please, without offending

“ every individual of her family,” as her father broadly expressed it. It was *their* approbation I was to regard; and it subsequently turned out that I was correctly right in a strong assertion I had made, that the pretended answer sent me to the foregoing Letter by her younger sister “ was not dictated by the excellent Emma,”* but by an Elder Sister. Had Miss Dobbin been *permitted to act for herself*; that is, had she been allowed to write her own answer, the dignity of her conduct on all other occasions, aided by a mind highly illumined, and adorned with the fairest graces of literature, are pledges of what might have been expected of her. Her Pride of character, of which no lady possesses more, would most honorably have fulfilled its prior engagement.

LETTER II.

Mr. Swift to Miss Harriet Dobbin.

Dorset-street, Circular-road, July 5, 1810

MADAM,

IN a letter I had the honor to write your sister, I gave her my word—and I am not apt to break it—that I would never again distress or

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* See Letter VIII.

offend her. The Letter was delivered to her so long ago as the third of last month, and composed, it is hoped, in no disrespectful language. Lest however, she should suppose me importunate or inconsistent, I address myself to you, Madam, and make it my request that you will let me know the cause of her silence, and the motive to which I am to ascribe it. What your politeness cannot refuse, your kindness will concede, when I inform you, that I have arrangements to make of importance to myself. Your knowledge of this circumstance will, I am persuaded, go hand in hand with your politeness, to inform me whether it be the intention of your sister that I shall be honored with an answer? It is all that I require; and the request, it is hoped, will not be deemed unreasonable.

I am as little apt to flatter as to break my word. I trust therefore you will credit the sincerity of my concern on the report of your late indisposition: Be assured, Madam, I most deeply regretted it. I felt likewise, felt unfeignedly for your whole family, notwithstanding they had discovered so little charity toward myself: and I now, Madam, in the same sincerity of heart, felicitate you all on the happy restoration of your health. It will give me real pleasure to understand it is perfectly established.

I told your sister I should wait her answer with anxious and painful suspense ; and now Madam, I wait yours with the same bleeding solicitude. Long may you enjoy the return of your health ! and may you always be as happy as I have been miserable ! ! ! It is the best wish I can offer you, and the prayer of him who has the honor to be, with high esteem and regard, your most obliged and faithful servant,

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

LETTER III.

Miss Harriet Dobbin to Mr. Swift.

MISS Harriet Dobbin's compliments to Mr. Swift, and informs him, from her sister, that she is much surprised he should imagine she would enter into any correspondence with him, and requests that he will not give himself so much unnecessary trouble, as she is determined to have no communication whatever with him. Miss H. Dobbin is much obliged to Mr. Swift for his inquiries for her health, which is much better.

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July 6, 1810.

LETTER IV.

Mr. Swift to the Rev. Doctor Dobbin.

Dorset-street, Circular-road, July 22, 1810.

SIR,

IT never was my wish to distress you or your family; and your goodness will excuse the present trouble I give you.

In our last correspondence, now more than five years ago, you were pleased to return me some books I had presented to the Ladies. My Letters to the object of my affection not having accompanied the Volumes, led me to suppose they had been detained as securities for the engagement to which I stood bound in so many promises. Conscious, however, that I required no written obligation to remind me of my duty, either as a man or as a gentleman, I acquiesced in their detention, from a thorough belief that had your family judged less unfavourably of me, they would have known the obligation to be written on my heart;—never, never to be effaced!--The promises I had made were sacred; and nothing human could have induced me to violate them.

About two years after, viz. in the month of March, 1807, being informed that the object to whom my Letters had been addressed, was on

the point of marriage with another gentleman, I wrote her a hasty* but affectionate Letter. After expressing my concern and surprise at the intelligence, the Letter goes on to say, "Should there be any foundation for this unhappy report, I beseech you to return me all the Letters I have at any time written you, together with such poems and other literary memorials of my affection, as you may possess.—In that event, they can be of no sort of use to you."

Here Sir, you will please to observe, the request is *conditional*. If the report was true, the Letters were to be returned. The report was *not* true, and the Letters were withheld.

"Hitherto," said the same affectionate Letter, "I was well pleased you had retained them." And I *was* well pleased. They were the images of my soul, the mirror of my very heart, and I did wish her to view it there. They might "be of use to her; they might survive to my reproach, should I at any *Subsequent Period* dishonourably forget myself, and thus dishonourably forget HER." So I explained it; and I now as distinctly state, that I am well pleased she should retain them for the very same purpose;—retain them to my confusion, if I dishonourably forget her. She could not mistake the obvious tendency of a Letter which

* See Appendix, No. IV.

had but one object; and if I expressed it ungracefully, it was not therefore unintelligible. She knew the terms of the tenure: she knew that she was holding the bonds of my allegiance, "Whose existing testimonies might serve as daily and living witnesses against me," should I dishonorably recede—dishonorably renounce "The solemn Assurances I had given her father, that I would never give her up;" or belie "The good opinion of her brother, who was better acquainted with my true character, than any of her family; and knew that I was incapable of saying one thing, and acting another; or of breaking my word with the beloved object of my affection."

These were the impassioned bursts of an heart that never yet deceived man or woman; an heart, which then thought it was losing for ever the single object for which it had a wish to beat;—an heart, prompted by the impulse only of Truth and of Honor, and warmed by that ardent fidelity which the Poet of Paradise imagined in the *fervent* and *unshaken* Abdiel. Whatever therefore may be the present state of my heart, or howsoever it hath been wronged or mis-judged, it doth not regret that it should have so little of earth in its composition; though it may lament perhaps the *humanity* of other people's.

The quoted passages are from a Letter whose original may always be resorted to. Was ever language more explicit, or more binding? If deficient in eloquence, it was strong in sincerity; and it is now three years and more, since I sealed that sincerity with my heart.

And shall I now be told, that after these solemn and unambiguous explanations, she is *surprised* I should expect her to acknowledge the respectful Letter of her old Correspondent? Were the proofs I had given her of my fidelity and affection so few, or so questionable, as to *surprize* her into a doubt of my Honor? Or have I no demand on her own Honor, which has detained for so many years the deposits of mine? Did I not stand committed to her in those deposits for the performance of that which would naturally be expected of me, when the *Subsequent Period* should arrive? And can she now affect ignorance, or say that I have dealt equivocally by her? Sir, the Call of Honor, as dear to me as that of Affection itself, tells me I am not in error; and as a man of Honor, I feel bound to obey it; *imperatively* bound to fulfil my part of the condition.—“With *Honor* I have loved, I have cherished you in my heart; and with *Honor* shall retain, whilst I HAVE an heart, the same sentiments of esteem for you.”—Such Sir, was the language of the honorable Letter I lately wrote her, and from it I shall not now dishonorably depart.

That I may not be misunderstood, I would say explicitly, that having besought her to return my Letters, should it be true that she was then preferring another to me, her Reservation of them implied, and gave me reason to conclude, that she was *not* preferring another; but that she reserved those bonds of affection as hostages and sureties for my fealty; and with a view of encouraging me to look forward to happier days. In that light, and in no other, I did then consider it, do now consider it, and shall ever consider it. What other construction, I would ask, could it possibly bear? Or what other interpretation will the world put upon it? It is the Broad Seal of the charter, confirmed to me by the voice of general assent, that, regarded and admired as she is, she hath not from that time to the present, favoured the pretensions of any other gentleman. And renewed Sir, repeatedly renewed, by the boasts and proclamations of her own family, that she is in possession of Letters from me without number, where I have given her every assurance of my affection,

This part of my Letter shall be concluded with briefly requesting the restoration of those boasted documents; more immediately that which is dated Wednesday September the 5th, 1804, the same which I put into her hand that evening at Mrs. Lefanu's. Possibly, it may be Tuesday the 4th. It was scribbled, however, on

an ordinary piece of paper. I was then on a visit at Finglas, and well recollect I had not better at command. But you will do me a favor by seeing that this Letter in particular be restored to me.

Sir, I intend you no disrespect; you know very well it is impossible that I should. But I now in the warm and assured sincerity of my heart, repeat the same honorable proposal I lately made to your own as well as to my beloved Emily. I ask nothing with her but your Blessing. To me Sir, it would prove an inestimable Dower. The disproportion I acknowledge in our years; none can be more sensible of it, or has more cause to lament it, than myself. But to deny Age its capacity to make another happy, were to belie the goodness of Providence, and to limit the extent of his power. If Time hath unsummered my brow, his Snows have not wintered my heart; nor will I yield to the youngest of her admirers in warmth of esteem for her numerous and unequalled virtues; nor in Honor, nor in Truth, nor in tried Fidelity, nor yet in long and suffering Affection. In none of these will I allow the proudest candidate for her favor to precede me. What I may want in youth, shall be made up to her in a whole life of tenderness, and one unfailing spring of affection. More I cannot promise, and less I will not perform. May I then

hope, Sir, that whatever displeasure I have caused you, length of time hath abated your anger? And that my respectful deportment toward the individuals of your family, under all our unhappy differences; together with the repeated proofs I have given of my unvaried affection through so many trials and difficulties, may induce you to alter your unkind opinion of me? Soften Sir, I beseech you, your extreme resentment; and permit me, I entreat, both to renew my affectionate addresses, and to press them in the manner that may be deemed best suited to favor my respectful hope.

Believe me Sir, I have the honor to be with high esteem and truth, your most faithful, humble servant.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

LETTER V.

Doctor Dobbin to Mr. Swift.

SIR,

I DID conceive that my daughter and I had been sufficiently explicit on the subject of your Letter—but for fear of misconception I now repeat that we both continue unalterably fixed in our determination, that the union you desire shall never take place, a determination in which every individual of my family decidedly concurs.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient and very

Humble Servant,

WILL. DOBBIN.

July 27, 1810.

MR. SWIFT.

The Doctor's curtness of expression brings to my mind that of Western in the Novel, "Shan't have her—shan't have her—shan't have her, tell you—shan't have her---shan't have her—shan't have her." Misfortune affects men differently. The boisterous and the sturdy for the most part are tamed by her rod, and scourged into feeling. The fierce, the iron-hearted

Suwarrow wept when Misfortune had laid her hand upon him. On those of an opposite mould Misfortune acts the other way. The meek and the gentle callously brave her strokes. Affliction takes away their understanding with their feelings. The mild, the charitable Doctor Dobbin, in proportion as his misfortunes multiple, becomes "unalterably" stern, and stiffens into a "determined" enemy.—The melancholy progress of the human mind teaches this severe but instructive lesson to man.

Error is the mother of misfortune. To want consistence, is to want principle; and the absence of principle is the absence of Truth; that *moral Truth*, I would say, which leads to honor and to happiness. In the month of April, 1805, I passed through King's-court, in my way to Cavan. Miss Jane Dobbin was there, and I waited upon her. As usual, my affection for Emily was the subject of our conversation. I mentioned her father, and the hope I had in him. She observed, that her father had not interfered in the marriages of her other sisters, and therefore was not likely to interfere now. I thought it an unwise policy; but the motive to it was obvious, though to my own pride not very flattering. Nevertheless, I augured favourably from the circumstance; and expected, if not *consistence*, at least *politeness*. Another month

undeceived me. His consistence writes me two laconic Letters, rings in each the same changes, and chimes as he does now the very same set of bells, the same brief argument, "Shan't have her, Shan't have her,"

Well—Three of his daughters he leaves uncontrolled. But when a *fourth* daughter contracts herself to a gentleman no way her inferior in honor or in birth, he that had not interfered where his interference might have been expected, takes the alarm ! Nothing shall move him from his "fixed and unalterable determination." Her other sisters may do as they like, but on Emily he lays an Embargo : she must have his Permit. Western will have it so. The *Family Drum* beats to arms, "Every individual" is summoned to the field, and "Shan't have her, Shan't have her" becomes the watch-word of all.—The fortunes of the fluctuating man necessarily fluctuate with him ; nor is it possible that the counsels of *inconsistence* should prosper. Happy for those who come not within the range of their influence !

LETTER VI.

Mr. Swift to Doctor Dobbin.

Dorset-street, Circular-road, July 28, 1810.

SIR,

I TAKE an early opportunity to acknowledge your Letter, which might have formed a more specific answer to that I had the honor to write you.

I had stated at large my request, that my Letters to your daughter Emily might be returned. No one out of your own family will say, that she ought to detain them. You affect however to disregard my request, and pass it over in silence, as if it had formed no part of my Letter, or was in itself of any consequence. Once more I beseech the restoration of those boasted documents. It will prevent another application. So long as they are withheld, I shall continue to apply for them, and to repeat the very same argument I used before, that she detains them as Hostages; and I now further add in explanation, that I shall deem myself not unfavored by her, while she continues to hold back the numerous and unequivocal explanations I had with her. It is but reasonable, that if I am given up, my Letters should be given up with me.

It was my design to notice in this place the "sufficient explicitness," which you assume as a fact, that she had given me of her "unalterable determination." But that discussion I reserve for another Letter, should she give me the opportunity by withholding those I have already written her.

I might stop here: but as you lay more than ordinary stress on the collective determination of your family, it is possible they might accuse me of unpoliteness, were I to overlook a circumstance of such importance.

Allow me then to assure you on all the honor of a gentleman, which I never pledged with more sincerity in my life, that their determination on this point neither moves nor surprises me. I did not ask their permission to marry your daughter; and I do not yet know that it concerns them the one way or the other. Most undoubtedly I shall not court their consent, nor solicit their instruction after what manner I am to comport myself. It had been time enough for them to announce their determination, when I should call upon them for it. I cannot therefore be swayed or affected by any of their resolutions. But if by the "decided concurrence of every individual of your family," I am to

understand that they have arrayed themselves against me, I do not hesitate to say, that I meet their intimidation as it deserves.

I would not offend you, Sir : but I cannot avoid observing that the unfortunate connections formed in your family leave little room for astonishment, that it should deprecate an alliance of another description.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

With all proper respect,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

LETTER VII.

Doctor Dobbin to Mr. Swift.

SIR,

I BEG leave to assure you that it was my wish to treat you with every possible respect, and it gives me real concern that my silence on the subject of the Letters addressed by you to my daughter, appears to you as a mark of neglect. I did conceive that the declaration contained in my Letter, on the part of my daughter and myself was a decisive proof that they could not be considered as hostages, and I therefore thought it unnecessary to speak of them. As to my

family being arrayed against you for the purpose of intimidation, you may rest assured that they did not entertain the most distant idea of intimidation to you. With respect to my daughter it was perfectly unnecessary, as she never hesitated for a single moment in her resolution—they merely declared their concurrence in her determination.

May I be permitted to add, without giving you offence, which it is my ardent wish to avoid, that as nothing new can occur to me on the subject, it is my desire that our correspondence may now be finally closed.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant,

WILL. DOBBIN.

August 4th, 1810.

MR. SWIFT.

It was natural that the Doctor should desire the *final* close of a correspondence by which he had gained so little, and by whose continuance some of his family were not likely much to profit. He found however that he had gone somewhat too far. He had offended the lion, and must now stroke him with civility. But a quarter of a year after, when the apprehended danger was out of sight, his charity refuses all

conciliation, notwithstanding the entreaty of his own old friend, one of the meekest and most amiable of men, who at my request had besought him to allow me an interview ; in order, as I stated, that we might shake hands, and come to a better understanding. In vain :—the Doctor *positively* refused it ;—and in the same breath as *positively* refuses, to surrender the hostages of my honor ; assigning it for a reason, that should I get possession of them, I might avail myself of their contents, and publish.

Had the Doctor not refused me the solicited interview, or had he not withheld those documents of the Contract, I had been spared the pain of writing, and he the mortification of receiving the following Letter ; productive, as it turned out, of consequences highly serious to his family. I shall only add, that this amiable friend who had solicited the interview, having represented to him, that should the Letters not be returned, it was possible I might address Miss Dobbin at the approaching Glassnevin Ball, and publicly demand them of her, the Doctor courtly answered—“ Then, she shan’t go ;” and he actually kept her from the Ball, making her thereby the Talk of the room, rather than give up the Letters, or acknowledge my politeness. (*See page 61*). It looks as if the family had “ determined” not only to oppose me in every way, but to oppose *themselves* in whatever should be right or proper for them to do.

LETTER VIII.

Mr. Swift to the Rev. Doctor Dobbin.

Dorset-street, Circular-road, Nov. 5, 1810.

SIR,

THIS Letter it is hoped you will by no means consider as an answer to your last, dated August the 4th. My reply to it I reserve for a future opportunity, should the renewed application for my Letters, which I have now the honor to make, be resisted.

There is however an important mistake in your Letter of the 27th. of July, which I forbore to correct at the time; but which I apprized you in my answer, it was my intention to set right, should the withholding of my Letters give me occasion. I allude to that part of it where you observe that your daughter had been *sufficiently explicit*.

Sir, I do assure you on the honor of a gentleman, that so far from her having been explicit at all, both the Letter which I wrote her, and the proposal which it contained, to this hour continue unanswered. So that the matter in question stands at this time precisely where it did on

the second of June : with this difference however, that Silence implies consent ; and that the detention of my Letters leads to a supposition that the overture I had the honor to make her, has not been rejected.

I received indeed a disrespectful note from Finglas, evidently not dictated by the Excellent Emma ; but manufactured by her whose rudeness had menaced me with the chastisement of her " Near and Dear relations." Its coarse accordance with such unfeminine violence and insult, betrays the quarter from whence it originated. You will please however to assure its author, that respectful attention shall be paid to her threat. You will likewise let Miss Harriet know, that her polite communication will not be overlooked. And yourself, Sir, I inform, that I shall not forget your own charitable and courteous treatment of me. The hour I apprehend is fast approaching, when I shall be " sufficiently explicit" with you all ; and shall give to " every individual of your family" a " decided" proof of " my fixed and unalterable determination."

But these observations were not designed for the present Letter, which had merely purposed to say, that, offended and irritated by the insults I had received, and no less violent mode of redress lying open to me, I did certainly say, that

it was extremely possible I might take the opportunity of the Glasnevin Ball to address your daughter, and audibly to demand my Letters of her. I did certainly intend it. Of two evils, I chose the minor: and I deemed it less unpolite to adopt that mode of obtaining the Letters, than to address her in a more public manner; which yet I may be compelled to do. Certainly, however, I did not intend her the slightest disrespect. But understanding, Sir, that in consequence of what I had let drop, it is her design to absent herself from the Ball, I request you will present her with my affectionate respects; and give her the fullest and most honorable assurance my heart can offer her, that I shall not distress her by my presence there, nor in any way interrupt her evening's amusement. I do hope therefore, that as from motives of the purest delicacy and esteem for her, I shall entirely keep away, she will accept the promise I make her as a test of that esteem, and of my sincere wishes for her peace, her honor, and her happiness. And should you think proper, Sir, you may farther assure her, it will give me abundant pleasure to hear that she has attended the Ball in good spirits, and with unembarrassed cheerfulness.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

LETTER IX.

Miss Emily Dobbin to Mr. Swift.

SIR,

Finglas, Nov. 20.

AS I understand with much regret that you lie under some mistake respecting my sentiments on the subject of your Letter of the 2d. of June, I beg leave to inform you that I positively decline the proposal you had the goodness to make, at the same time I feel fully sensible of the honor you have done me, and infinitely obliged for the opinion which you entertain of me.

I send the Letters for which you express a wish, and have no doubt of your seeing the propriety of harbouring no other sentiments towards me, than such friendly wishes for my welfare, as I shall ever feel for yours.

I remain, Sir, with respect,

Your much obliged, humble servant.

E. L. DOBBIN.

Concerning the Letter which my friends have just read, I shall offer a few words after I have introduced to their acquaintance two other Ladies, now no more, with whose friendship and correspondence it had been my good fortune to be honoured.

One, the great Miss Seward, the Raffaele of epistolary eloquence. It was not possible to know, and not to admire the Litchfield Thalia. Her conversation was the page of fancy illuminated by philosophy, and fired by the phrensy of an eye in which her whole soul stood beaming, but which her heart often watered with a tear: for she possessed all those finer sensations that are found to accompany true genius. Compassion as she spoke—and she loved an interesting tale—would break in sighs from her feeling and fervent bosom, and fan the friendship that in her was affection. I have listened, I have gazed on her with amazement, and almost fancied myself in the company of a Muse, as the varied modulation of her voice recommended the tide of wisdom and genius that poured from her lips. The world has seldom produced such a woman! The last time I saw her, I spent four entire days with her, to the total exclusion of all other visitors; and at night returned to my Inn delighted, instructed, astonished! She allowed me to weep over the recent events of her life. She who was so well able to give advice to others, requested mine. I gave it her in all the prompt ardence of sincerity; and left her, at her own solicitation, some written instructions, for which her eye thanked me with a parting tear—we parted indeed to meet no more!

My other fair friend was the soft Trefusis, the Guido of epistolary grace; or, as I had named her, nor did she disdain the compliment, "The Tenth Muse of tenderness." If her Letters did not blaze with the fire that burned in those of the mighty Seward; if like hers, they did not *storm* your heart, they *stole* it. All the delicacies of composition were at her command; all the eloquent feelings of the heart, all the felicitous expression of the soul animated her gentle page. Her eye was the softness of the Evening Star; her voice the whisper of a Seraph, tuned to the sweetest harmonies; and as her mind, so was her person clothed with angelic beauty, the dignity of the one reflecting its fairest graces in the other. Her lustre was unborrowed, it was her own; an immutable Moon of the serenest splendor. She possessed all my friendship, because she had never disappointed it; and had all my esteem, because she deserved it beyond every other woman. I admired *Luna*, but was fated to love *Emily*. Miss Dobbin must remember, that in several of my Letters I had noticed my delightful correspondent; to whose taste and kindness, I have often told her, that I owed whatever grace of composition I might possess. She refined all the roughness of my uncourtly muse, gave to my very heart a new polish, and taught my pen to move in uni-

son with it. At this moment, might I be allowed to say it, I feel the advantage of her amiable tuition; and could she hear me from the tomb where her gentle spirit now sleeps in peace, I should thank her with my loudest gratitude. To associate the Moon of Finglas with this admirable lady, were no mean test of the respect I bear to her own mild and commanding genius.

These ladies I have mentioned, in order to observe, that should the Letters of Miss Dobbin possess neither the tempest of the one, nor the zephyr of the other, they possess that which is better than either, the *Divinus Afflatus* of both; and I would place her a Third Grace between her two literary sisters. The finest Letters I have ever read were some of those with which I had been honored by her: and one in particular, which for grace of composition and courtliness of expression, was never surpassed by either of my respected friends. This Letter, however, which *Attila* himself would have spared, my own destructive hand lately annihilated, in the same flame that consumed all her other Letters to me; but could not obliterate its language from my heart, where Affection had transcribed it with a sun-beam! It was dated the 19th of September, 1804, one fortnight exactly after the unfortunate Letter which I gave her at Mrs. Lefanu's; but

which Letter she sent me word a few weeks ago, she had just then destroyed. It is not however on her Letters to *Myself* that I ground my judgment of her great epistolary talents. I am in possession of one of hers, *not written to myself*, and most certainly not intended for *my* inspection, which gives me the highest opinion of her literary genius. Should Miss Dobbin question the Letter, or wish to possess it, any morning that she appoints I will put it into the hand that wrote it. The happiness of its language, combined with other motives, induced me to take two copies of it, lest the original, or one of them, should be lost. And though on my own account, I have no cause to applaud it, my candour must acknowledge its admirable composition.

My friends are now in full possession of Miss Dobbin's talents as a Letter-writer. They will not wonder therefore that I was delighted with her Correspondence; nor will they be astonished at the excellence of the Letter they have just read; which, considering the difficulties she had to encounter, the embarrassment, the alarm, the distraction under which it was composed, is a happy effort of a disciplined and enlightened mind. Novels themselves do not often present situations so distressing or so discouraging. She is less however to be envied under the pressure of such accumulated difficulties, than admired for her address in getting out of them.

But she knew the power she had over me ; she knew that a Letter from *herself* would prove her best passport to my favour ; she knew I would never carry my resentment into her beloved bosom. She judged me right ; and though so vastly her inferior in the art of epistolary composition, my answer to her excellent Letter will, I trust, be found a proof that she was not deceived in me.

The first emotion her fine Letter raised in my mind, was *admiration* : this was succeeded by *pity* : and when I came to the word “HARBOURING,” connected as it stood with the return of the Letters, my heart rained tears of blood. I had been less than man to have misused the power she had so voluntarily, and so generously confided to me. My eyes gushed a mingled torrent of compassion, affection and grief :—the workings of Nature gave way :—that instant I resigned my own happiness to hers, resigned her to the very man for whom she had deserted me, and to ensure whose unobstructed union with her, she had written me that excellent Letter. Nor was this all : I returned on the spot, untouched, and unopened, the proofs with which she had armed me ; giving her in that act a further test of the affection I bore her. Her Letter, her admirable Letter accomplished all this ! Had it been composed in terms less kind or less respectful, or had its affecting appeal been less touchingly made,

it would have failed of its effect:—I had followed the example of her own father, and remained “*determined*.” It is not possible that to her exalted genius I can pay a more respectful compliment, than to say, that I bowed to its influence, and sacrificed all the peace of my days to its power and authority.

But how intricate, how multiplied the ways of Error! What a scale they form of delusion! How the links of the chain lengthen, and one fatal step leads to another! Miss Dobbin erred in breaking her engagement:—To correct *that*, she treats my Letter with silent disrespect:—To correct *that*, her sister is deputed to offend me:—To correct *that*, the documents of the Contract are withheld:—To correct *that*, her father writes me an insulting Letter:—To correct *that*, he writes me a civil one:—To Correct *that*, his Charity refuses me an interview:—To correct *that*, he compels me to write him an alarming Letter:—To correct *that*, she who was “*surprized* I should imagine she would enter into any correspondence with me,” *surprizes* me with a Letter;—she who “requests I will not give myself so much unnecessary trouble,” necessarily takes that trouble upon herself;—she who is “determined to have no communication whatever with me,” opens that communication;—she who tenaciously withholds my Letters, obligingly restores them;—she who fears the detection of the Contract,

furnishes the Proofs;—she who dreads their publication, ministers the means; and she who breaks her Honorable Engagement, throws herself on *my* Honor!—On the Honor of the very man whom she had so feared, so wronged, and so deceived!

Such is the progress of Error! and with it the progress of Pride; which is sure to be attended with Obstinacy, and that again as certainly attended with Misfortune. That Pride, that Obstinacy humbled them: and they have now to thank themselves only, and their own inveterate errors, for all the unfortunate events that have resulted to them from the first infraction of the Contract to the last effort of their weak and misguided counsels.

LETTER X.

Mr. Swift to Miss Emily Dobbin.

Dorset-street, Circular-road, Nov. 23, 1810.

MADAM,

FOR the favour of your polite and very kind attention to the Letter I had the honor to write you, I beg leave to return you my sincere thanks.

Though it conveys such unhappy intelligence, your goodness will always be respectfully and gratefully acknowledged by me. And should any unpleasant circumstance have resulted from your silence, I beseech you that it may be remembered no more. I assure you, Madam, it shall be blotted for ever from my heart.

Let appearances have assumed what late forms they may, I declare to you for a truth, that I never once indulged a thought disrespectful of you, or one that was unfavourable to your happiness. So far from it, that it will always contribute to my own—should happiness remain for me the short time I have to live—to hear that you enjoy that felicity, and that peace of mind which has passed from me, never to return! I cannot promote your happiness; but I sincerely wish it you in the connexion you are about to form with a more fortunate and more deserving, but oh! not more affectionate man!

And here, Madam, I thank you from my heart for your own kind wishes towards me. The propitiation of such embodied Goodness might once have availed: but I must not now expect that it will please God I should survive long enough to enjoy the fruits of it.—I look back, and find myself a poor ship-wrecked solitary mariner, that eyes with hopeless regard the last faint rays of the parting sun yet lingering

on the agitated bosom of the waters.—He weeps!—The darkness covers him!—The plank to which he clung, forsakes him!—He drops into that ocean which gapes to swallow him!

As to the Letters—those pictures of my yet unfading affection, but unperishable *esteem*—it will be sufficient that you let me know you have committed them to the flames; and with them, the papers I had communicated to your sister, whose injuries I forgive, and wish entirely to forget. When I hear you have destroyed them, I shall at the same instant destroy the last and only remnant of peace left to me;—yes Madam, shall sacrifice in the flames also those dear and precious memorials of your hand that had been the solace of my life; but which I now must treasure only a few, few days, and then—lose them for ever!

I have nothing left to add but a heart whose affection I must recal the moment that I hear it is dangerous, and even dishonorable, that it should continue to be your's: and you judge very justly of me when you observe, that I must see the propriety of entertaining for you no other sentiments than those of kindness and good wishes.

The pen trembles in my hand as I bid you farewell!—an *eternal* farewell!—Dear, dear Emma, whilst yet I may call you so, farewell!—Sweetest, best beloved of women, farewell!—

Be happy!—Happy as a man so unfortunate can wish HER whom for so many years he had cherished in the recesses of his soul! Happy, happy may you be!—Happy, as I am left wretched beyond the power of medicine or consolation!

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

LETTER XI.

Mr. Swift to the Rev. Thos. Ph. Lefanu.

Dorset-street, Circular-road, Dec. 12, 1810.

SIR,

AFTER many struggles with myself, lest the motive which induces me to trouble you should be misapprehended, I have the honor to address you on a subject that deeply affects the happiness of my life. I cannot possibly intend you, Sir, the slightest disrespect, as both your character and your profession entitle you to my esteem: I trust, therefore, you will not ascribe to me any motives inconsistent with politeness.

I could not permit myself to enclose you a late correspondence that I have had with a family best known by their misfortunes, and numbered amongst the unhappy. Delicacy and respect for you prevent me from laying that

correspondence before you: but might I be allowed to communicate it, you would find, Sir, that I had been for several years bound in an honorable obligation of marriage to Miss Emily Dobbin; and that I was to have been united to her on the completion of an event which took place about ten months ago.

On reviving my addresses, however, and urging that honorable obligation, I found in the family a very disrespectful and very unexpected resistance: and after some heated altercations, it was imparted to me through the friends of Miss Dobbin, that she could not receive my addresses, for that she had formed an engagement with another: and on asking with whom that new engagement was formed, You, Sir, were named as the gentleman; and your union with her said to be peremptorily determined.

In a few days after this unexpected communication, I was surprised with a Letter from Miss Dobbin herself; informing me, what she had not hitherto done, that she *positively* declined the union I had looked to. Finding that the family were under a domestic cloud, and that it was not probable they would ever emerge from it, I wrote Miss Dobbin a respectful answer, and there made her a voluntary, and I do hope, Sir, an honorable surrender in your favor of all my prior pretensions; and without one reproachful word, sacrificed my long-cherished and abused affections to your mutual happiness.

It was not possible, Sir, had you known the state of my wounded and afflicted heart, that one man could have made to another a more generous or a more disinterested sacrifice. And as it was entirely unknown to yourself, I hope you will not refuse to inform me which of two contradictory reports I am to credit? That which I have already mentioned as coming from Miss Dobbin's own friends, in order, it should seem, to frustrate my anterior pretensions:—or that other coming also from the same quarter, That the report of your intended marriage with her is not founded in truth; for that you are *not* to be married to her. From the family themselves I am not likely to obtain information: but should the latter prove to be the truth, it is my design to resume those pretensions which I had relinquished in your favor; and to assert them also in the manner, and at such time, as I may best be advised to do. To no Gentleman, however, except to yourself, will I surrender my long and strong claims upon her honor. The truth of one or the other of these reports will determine either the acquiescence in your favor, which I have already expressed in my answer to Miss Dobbin's Letter; or the active and steady resumption of my claims.

I stand suspended between the two discrepant reports, and know not which to believe; but suspect it to be a finesse of the family, with a design to mislead me. On your obliging answer, however, will depend the whole color and impression of my future life. As a clergyman, your Love of truth will, I am very certain, respect that truth; and as a gentleman, your Candor, I am equally certain, will assure it to me. Could these be absent from you for a moment, your Humanity will not trifle with my peace; nor your Politeness hesitate to remove the doubt that perplexes my heart.

Should it be your good fortune to be favored by this amiable but misguided Lady, I must wish you, Sir, that happiness in her which has been denied to me; but which I had entertained the hope she would not have disappointed.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

With perfect respect,

Your most obedient, humble Servant.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

I do not conceive myself at liberty to publish Mr. Lefanu's answer to the foregoing Letter; and must regret that without his permission I have it not in my power to oblige my friends, or to make it a part of the present Correspondence. Mr. Lefanu, however, does not dispute that Miss Dobbin had been præ-contracted to me; or affect to say, that he was ignorant of the fact when he formed his own contract with her. On the contrary, he "relies on my honor and delicacy as a Gentleman, that I will not mention the circumstance; as thus situated, it would be distressing for a female to be the subject of public conversation."

I am the guardian of my own honor, and can suffer no person to direct it. Honor is a living and wakeful principle of the soul, which God and Nature had designed should never be *stilled*, and which cannot possibly be laid to sleep in the breast of a Gentleman. Never was I known to compound my honor, never did I vacillate between Truth and Falsehood. I had told her father, and Mr. Lefanu could not but know it that "the Call of Honor was as dear to me as that of Affection itself," and that I would never "*dishonorably* forsake my beloved Emily." How then could it be supposed that I would compromise my affection; or imagined that I would silence my own Honor, in order to accom-

moderate that of another? I must hope, therefore, that my friends will not unfavorably judge me, but allow that through the course of this severe and painful trial, I have acted with the Spirit and with the Honor of a Gentleman.

LETTER XII.

Mr. Swift to the Rev. Thos. Ph. Lefanu.

Dorset-street, Circular-road, Dec. 18; 1810.

SIR,

MY absence from Dublin prevented me from sooner returning you my thanks for your obliging communication; but I am concerned it will not be in my power to comply with the request you make, as it might be supposed from my silence that I had dishonorably abandoned Miss Dobbin, and broken the solemn engagement into which I had entered with her; or that I had connived at the treatment I had received, and chose to hush up my own conduct. For these and other considerations, it cannot be expected that I should impose a seal on my lips, or withhold a truth by which I have been so wronged and injured.

I would respectfully observe, that your projected marriage with Miss Dobbin is by no means a secret, and that it has been for some time past a subject of public conversation.— In all the later copies of my correspondence which I had caused to be transcribed and circulated, I found it necessary your name and her's should be referred to. It is not possible to stop the Talk of a Tea-table, or for Silence to ~~so~~nder a Breach of Faith. But as Miss Dobbin formed a second engagement before she had cancelled her first, it should not be concealed that I have honorably resigned her to you, and that she is now contracted to another; for her own honor as well as for mine, it should be generally so understood.

I repeat, Sir, my good wishes for your happiness; and should have wanted all your's for myself, had it been my lot to enter a family so uniformly inauspicious, and one that Misfortune indefatigably pursues. I am not a superstitious man: but in the moral and political world, an Ill fate is often observed to follow states and families; and the same Ill fate to extend its shade over their remotest connexions. The Dobbin family are an instance of it.— Nothing but Misfortune attends their calamitous counsels. Sure I am that I found its truth, when I found in the infatuated father of the tutored Emily such implacable disrespect, such dark and tenacious resistance to my alliance;—

to my taking an unprovided daughter from the house of Sorrow and Poverty, and the raising her to Independence and Respect. It is only to be ascribed to that Fatality which never forsakes them. Your union with them may, however, break the spell, and disenchant the phantom that watches their door, and glooms their concerns within. For your own sake, I sincerely wish it may: but when I have applied the principle to myself, my reasoning could never resist its truth, nor my firmest philosophy banish from about me the Spectre of that devoted family.

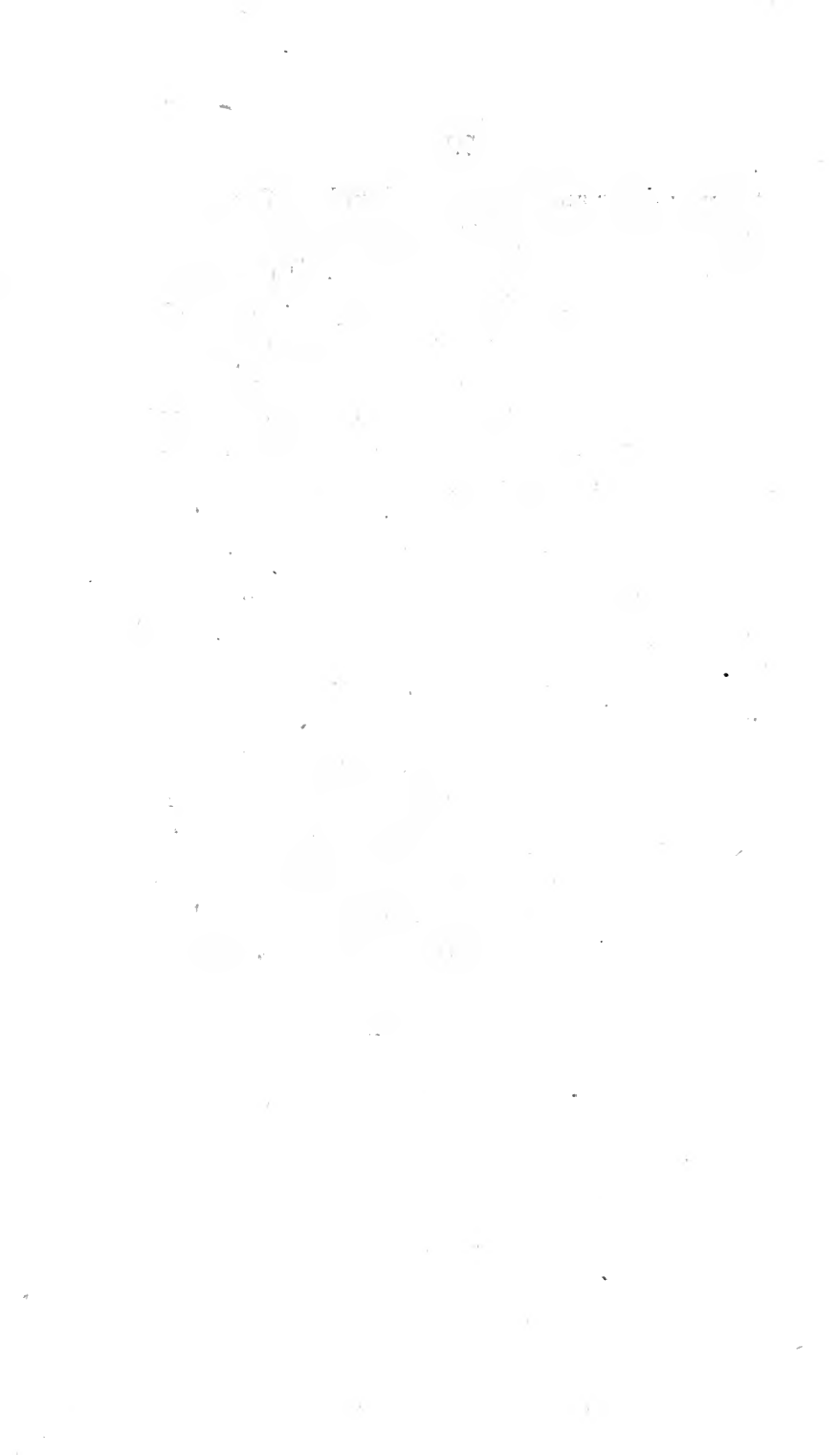
I ask your pardon for such unwelcome words; but I never disguise the sentiments or the operations of my heart: and most assuredly, that which I have just observed will be found less visionary than many of our waking dreams.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

With much respect,

Your obliged, humble servant,

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.



THE CHALLENGE.

IN WHICH

THE CONDUCT

OF

DOCTOR DOBBIN'S FAMILY

IS CONSIDERED.

Dublin:

1811.



PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

A LATE Imposture having been contrived and carried on for the purpose of insulting me, I owe it to myself, that the conduct of those concerned in it should be made known to my respected friends.

About the beginning of June, I received a letter from a person describing himself the Nephew of Doctor Dobbin, and calling upon me to fight him in that capacity. The letter having been composed much in the style and manner of another which I had before received from one of the Doctor's family; and issuing, as it purported to do, from his house at Finglas; I could neither dispute its authenticity or doubt by whom it had been dictated. And I had the less reason to question its Veraciousness, because that person had been in the habit of dictating disrespectful letters to me, under the name and signature of the family. The present letter was signed *James Dobbyn*; and his Uncle's house at Finglas named as his address.

A few days after, it was intimated to me that this James Dobbyn was an impostor; but that the family had opened my answer to his

letter, and possessed themselves of its contents. I was not astonished, but I deemed it dishonorable; because the servant who carried my letter to Finglas, when he delivered it, had sent it in, as I had instructed him to do, with my own immediate compliments; for though we were at variance, I did not think it necessary that I should be unpolite. And he signified, in the like respectful manner, that the letter so sent in had come from *Me*. But this was not all: the letter itself was superscribed with my own Hand, and sealed with my own Arms, both of which were familiar to them. Mistake there could be none: the insult was manifest, though the motive remained to be accounted for. Nevertheless, I suppressed my indignation, and wrote in a respectful manner to the Doctor, requesting he would return me the letter addressed to his Nephew. From delicacy however, and in the expectation he would restore it with some expression of concern for the *accident*, I forbore to notice the dishonorable circumstance; and indeed I was unwilling, by any offensive word, to check or disappoint the apology he might intend. But my delicacy was in no danger: for he withholds the letter which I had requested him to return; and that addressed to himself he sends back, *unopened*.*

* It should here be observed, that when I sent my letter to the Doctor, it was brought him by the same servant, who delivered it with the same expressions of homage to the same servant

On the morning of the day that the Doctor had so returned my letter, an accident disabled my right hand from holding a pen. This circumstance, together with a wish to give the family the fullest opportunity of restoring the letter, and explaining their conduct, caused the matter to stand over for a week or ten days. On the twenty-first of June, being then just able to resume my pen, my friends judged it advisable that I should lose no time in making Mr. Lefanu acquainted with the fact; lest those who had shown so little respect for my *Scal*, under whose confidence the name of Miss Dobbin had been familiarly introduced, should show as little respect for *Truth*; and availing themselves of their own act, should represent the fraud to have been contrived by myself, for the purpose of casting reflections upon her. The imputation I disdained; but their conduct had justified the suspicion, and they had vowed inextinguishable hostility to me. I did not hesitate: I yielded in a moment to the suggestion of those whose judgment I respected, and in whose friendship I was secure. I should not, however, deem the circumstance worth noticing, but to account how it happened that I troubled Mr. Lefanu.

to whom he had delivered my former letter; that when he sent it in, the Ladies were standing at the parlour window; and that the two letters were superscribed with the very same Hand, and sealed with the very same Arms — How the Contrivers happened to mistake the one for the other, is always within their power to explain.

My friends should be informed, that having detained my reply to the letter of his pretended Nephew for the long space of nineteen days ; that is, from the fifth to the twenty-fourth of June ; the Doctor returned it with its impression fractured and disfigured, and its leaves soiled and rubbed in the most unhandsome manner ! If my former book had displeased him, this was not the way to answer it : the press was as open to him and to his family, as it had been to me : and I had neither monopolized it nor *intimidated printers*. The Doctor, therefore, might have returned my answer to his Nephew's challenge with the same alacrity that he returned my letter to himself ; that is, he might have returned it, *unopened*, within forty hours. Had he done this ;—had he even tinkered it up again after his curiosity had taken a peep—it would have saved us all abundance of trouble ; and what to *them* had been of far more importance, would have prevented the necessity of the present publication. But having opened the letter which I had *not* addressed to him, yet having not opened that which I *had*, he has compelled me to open it for him ; and to make it as *public* as himself had made that other which was *private* ; but whose contents, for the sake of her whom they sacrifice to the Genius of their ill-fated politics, I do sincerely lament that her own Father should have been the first to expose and exhibit.

To break a seal, and get at the knowledge of another's secrets, is an offence suited only to the Vulgar : in a Gentleman, whose education should teach him a fairer morality, highly dishonorable ; but in a Clergyman, most irreverent. Should a Lady infringe a seal, or advise its infringement in another, I should say of her, that she is dangerous, and unworthy to be trusted ; for that she who would violate a seal, would violate her faith, and break in sunder the bands which the dearest confidence had bound. I do not wish to be severe, or to strain the moral ; but I conceive it incumbent on the Doctor and his family to defend themselves from the charge.

Miss Dobbin will accept my humble, but well-intended vindication of her from the imputation of combining with her family either in their impotent imposture or their dishonorable breach of my seal. I entirely and wholly acquit her of both. Faithless as she has been to me, I am very certain she would not *conspire* to insult me. Nor can I possibly suppose, that at this time of her life, she would collude with others, be their influence over her never so dominant, in the forging of an instrument calculated at every point to injure her own prospects and advancement. It is too monstrous for belief ; but not too monstrous for INTOXICATED Projects.

5 Their motive for writing the letter breaks out in the Postscript, where they had supposed it would pass undiscovered. Sore from the effects of my book, and with all their superior and combined talents, not venturing to answer a page of it, they sought and hoped redress in another way. Fraud and Menace were at hand. If Intimidation failed, I was to be duped into "ATONEMENT;" and too proud to acknowledge their errors, they were to find in *Me* that defence which they despaired of in *Themselves*. This was their argument; "We'll get him to direct his answer to Finglas: 'twill have a good appearance: and we'll put him into this situation, that he shall either fight, or make an "Atonement." But sooner than fight, he'll revoke what he has said of us: and when we have got his revocation, addressed to one of our own name, and sent to our own house, we can always prefer it against him; and prove him, under his hand, a misrepresenter of the truth. His book will then fall to the ground: and we shall have this further advantage, that 'twill look to the world as if 'twas not WE who had been dishonorable, but "HIMSELF."—That such was their *motive* for writing the letter, and such their mode of arguing, none will dispute, except those who are unacquainted with the Profundity of their Politics, and the SOBERNESS of their Counsels.

Let us for a moment suppose, that from dread of the tremendous Captain, and his ireful impatience, I had made the "Atonement" on which they relied, would they not have availed themselves of the concession, and have published it in their vindication, as their best answer to my book? They had been less *ingenious* than the world supposes them to be, had they omitted the opportunity.

Under a supposition that they would *reflect*, and that themselves would make some atonement, I delayed to send these papers to the Press. But not having condescended to take any farther notice, I am bound to conclude the offence to have been studied and designed; and therefore am obliged to lay the transaction before those kind friends who had interested themselves in my former publication; that they may judge of the treatment I have received, and the meditated insults which have been offered to me. I could enlarge these observations, and read the family a Lesson in Ethics, for which some of them might not be thankful. But, lest it should be imputed to me, that I had seized the opportunity to disparage Miss Dobbin, I close the page upon them; and forbear to extend the lecture in morality which I had designed; but which, I do trust and hope, they will not, by another experiment, call upon me to renew.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT

July 27th, 1811.

[illegible][illegible]

PREFACE

TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

I had designed not to trouble my friends with a second Preface; but since the first publication of *The Challenge*, Miss Dobbin's Reporters have again been at work; and unable to invalidate a page of its truth, give out in Corners, That in the letter I had occasion to write Mr. Lefanu, I had made him an *Apology* for the opinion I had delivered of Miss Dobbin. The Letter is before my friends:* They will judge how far it was composed in the spirit of *Apology*. I feel, indeed, great and sincere concern, that I should either have had occasion to form that opinion, or been compelled to communicate it to others: and I still hope that Miss Dobbin, for so I shall continue to call her, will believe that I take no pleasure in reviving this delicate part of the subject. But her own Reporters have rendered it necessary to my credit, that I should be explicit with them. Her Character and mine are at issue: her's I respect; but my own is as dear to me as Herself had ever been.

M 2

* Letter XVI.

When her family observed that *Atonement* had failed, they fasten me with *Apology*. In their eagerness for error, they mistook Politeness for Concession, and "Painful Explanation" for Evasive Apology. Those who ascribe to my heart such equivocal Morality, know very little of its movements: it may suit those who are steady in nothing but Inconsistence, but is ill adapted to the decided principles of a Gentleman. I made no Apology; and I intended none: it was not possible that I should; for none had been demanded, and *Truth* did not require it. The opinion which I had formed of Miss Dobbin, was of their own Discovery; and if I communicated that opinion to Mr. Lefanu, their own Act had compelled it. I then deplored, as I told him, and I now deplore, the weakness of her own father who had sacrificed his own Daughter to the passions of his deluded family. The opinion had been locked within my own breast; and there it would have abided but for their own illaudable Curiosity. I had not framed it to answer a purpose; and never to answer any purpose, did I yet retract a Truth, or discredit my Integrity. I do lament, and shall ever lament, that Miss Dobbin should have induced that opinion: but it was extorted from me: her own family, her own misguided and unfortunate family had extorted it: and their own "infatuated politics," as I told Mr. Lefanu,

had imposed its disclosure on me. The *opinion* was my own; the *offence* their's: and I could not have apologized for the offence of others. I left them to make their own Apology.

In this distinction, Courtesy and Truth had gone hand in hand: they were concurrent. But to coarse comprehensions Civility and Insincerity are qualities of the same nature, and terms that import the same thing. In some, however, this loose morality, this fluctuating, this indiscriminate philosophy—I know not by what name to call it—may be excused: for Ignorance is its own *Apology*, and Vulgaritv is entitled to the tenderness of those whose opportunities of better Knowledge and better Breeding furnish a better Lesson. Offenders may have felt my pen; but felt, I hope, its *Point* only of Politeness. Should I, then, have expressed myself in a gracious and becoming manner toward the Gentleman who was going to marry Miss Dobbin, shall it be imputed to me that I had recalled or qualified the Truth? Shall Ignorance be allowed to tell me so?—I tell Ignorance and all its vulgar Reporters, I would no more be guilty of an *Apology* for Truth, than I would be guilty of an *Atonement*.

Perspicuity is the Grace of composition. A great Critic has classed it among the Virtues.* Sure I am, that I respect it as the Muse of Truth; and sure I am also, that I never designedly, and therefore *immorally*, wrote to be misapprehended. It is the duty of a writer not only to make himself *understood*, but to take care that he be not *misunderstood*. I have often been accused of *too much* perspicuity, but till lately had never been charged with a want of ~~of~~ plain-speaking. THEREFORE, I acquaint Reporters, in the unqualified language of Truth, that should there be any one word in my letter to Mr. Lefanu which Ignorance or Perversion hath assumed as *Apology*, I have been most grossly and wrongfully misapprehended. Lest, however, I should again be misapprehended, I farther acquaint Them and their Employers, that much as I regret the Revival of the unhappy subject, and deprecate *on Miss Dobbin's account* the discussion into which they have forced me, I maintain, and do now repeat the same unaltered opinion: which opinion, however, her own Near and Dear Relations had themselves promulgated, and been the first to expose, when they broke into the sanctuary of my private thoughts. And this opinion—I express it with concern—I am bound to proclaim, and do

* *Prima est Virtus Perspicuitas. Quintil.*

proclaim; not in Holes and Corners, after the manner of Whisperers and Reporters, but on the House-top, that I may be distinctly heard and *perspicuously* understood.

Should these Reflexions be deemed uncourtly, I observe, that I had endeavoured to accommodate their language to the apprehension of those whose perverseness repels all Delicacy. For such, however, these pages were not designed: but for those enlightened and indulgent friends, whose judgment will discriminate between TRUTH and *Atonement*, between *Consistence* and *Apology*; and whose kindness will make allowance for the Embarrassments of that Politeness which had studied to give as little offence as possible to Mr. Lefanu.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

October 31st.

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific information required.

• *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 1999;38:1039-1045

CHALLENGE, &c.

LETTER XIII.

To Theophilus Swift, Esq.

Dublin 2d. June 1811.

SIR,
I ONLY arrived yesterday from fighting the battles of my country in Spain, and before I had eat a single morsel in my native land after an absence of two years, your infamous attack on the family of my respected Uncle Doctor Dobbyn, was put into my hands. I have read it with the just indignation an Irishman must, to see an old hoary lecher attempt to brow-beat an old Clergyman into the sacrifice of his youthful Daughter to the arms of such an old miscreant : but as you profess yourself to be a man of honor and a gentleman, I will expect you to give me that satisfaction the sufferings of my family demands from your false and infamous assertions, by meeting me at the Obelisk Phenix in the Park on fifth of June at the hour of twelve in the forenoon.

If you decline it, I will post you as an Incendiary, Coward, Liar and Scoundrel.

I am Sir,

Your injured servant,

JAMES DOBBYN.

Postscript. If you wish to make a proper atonement for your malignant attack on my dear friends, a line directed to me at my Uncle's Finglas, will be instantly attended to by me.

LETTER XIV.

*To James Dobbyn, Esq.**At the Rev. Doctor Dobbin's, Finglas.**Dorset-street, June 5th, 1811.**Two o'Clock in the Morning.*

SIR,

I am not accustomed to receive or to answer disrespectful Letters: but as you tell me you have been qualifying yourself in Spain to fight the battles of Miss Dobbin in Ireland, I must presume that she sends you as her Champion, in order to put me out of the way, lest I should stand between her and her more youthful Lover.* I am warranted in this conclusion, because, Sir, you are pleased to treat the years with which God has honored me, with indecent and unbecoming Reflections. As you seem, however, to have formed some very imperfect and erroneous

* This sentiment Dryden had applied to a Princess, of whom he says,

“ Meantime she stands provided with a Laius,

More young and vigorous too, by twenty Springs.”

It is curious to observe, that the family should deem me too old for Miss Dobbin, but young enough to encounter her Champion.

ideas of Miss Dobbin's differences with me, I must acquaint you, that I have long since handed her over to Mr. Lefanu; and that I do not intend to molest her marriage with him. In truth, Sir, I should never have entertained a thought of her, had not herself drawn me on, by leading me to suppose that the addresses which she had encouraged, would have been acceptable to her.

I have also to acquaint you, that let my former opinion of Miss Dobbin have been what it might, I no longer entertain the same esteem of her. Her late conduct has entirely changed the respect I had for her: and if all which I have heard be true, I have no difficulty to declare that she is undeserving of my affections. I shall not, therefore, fight you on her account; or erect a new reputation for her by staining my honor in her service.

You say Sir, I have "injured" you.—It is impossible.—I have not the honor to know you. Till I received your letter I had never heard of such a person as Mr. James Dobbyn, or knew that the family had so "Near and Dear a Relation." Your mistake, therefore, I impute to the same delusive source of information from whence you derived your other misconceptions.

In a letter which I wrote to Mr. Lefanu, I stated a painful truth—That an Ill-fate is often observed to follow particular families: and in proof of it, I instanced that of the Dobbins. Yourself, Sir, has confirmed what I had before asserted; and your imprudent dragging of Miss Dobbin into a yet more public notice than by her own conduct she had drawn *herself*, has literally made good the words which I had used on the occasion, that “It can only be ascribed to that fatality which never forsakes them.”

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most Obedient Servant

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

P. S. Your letter of the 2d. did not reach Dorset-street until a late hour yesterday. I had left home early in the morning, and did not return till after midnight.—Had I been within when it arrived, I should have given it an immediate answer.

LETTER XV.

To the Rev. Doctor Dobbin.

Dorset-street, June 10, 1811.

SIR,

Last week I received a letter of a most extraordinary nature, subscribed *James Dobbyn*. It bore date, "Dublin June 2d.", but was not delivered in Dorset street till the fourth, at a very advanced hour of the day. I had been absent from home the entire of it; and not having returned till long after midnight, was prevented from giving it an answer until the morning of the fifth. The writer named you, Sir, as his *Uncle*; and your house at Finglas as his "*Direction*."

Although his letter was evidently intended to insult me, and from the cast of its language not entitled to regard, yet Sir, as it bore the name of *Dobbin*, I felt myself bound to acknowledge it, and even to give it an instant reply. Accordingly, Sir, I dispatched a servant with my answer that very morning, between the hours of eight and nine. The servant informs me, that he delivered my letter to a Female servant who opened your door, and told him the family had not yet came down stairs; but that she would take care to let them have it. My servant, in obedience to the instruction I had given him, when he delivered the letter, delivered also *My*

compliments with it ; and was very particular, as I had likewise instructed him to be, both in signifying from whom the letter had come, and in observing that it was for *Mr. James Dobbyn*.

Mr. Dobbyn had menaced me with his resentment ; and I had impatiently waited the execution of his threat : but nothing having subsequently occurred, I was induced, Sir, to take the liberty of enquiring whether you had a Nephew in Dublin, or elsewhere, bearing the name of the Subscriber?—The result is, that should the letter prove an Imposture, it was not only a weak and very unfeeling joke, but if designed as an act of friendship to your family, a very mistaken kindness, and such as deserves their severest reprehension.

Should my answer, therefore, to this ill-advised Letter not have been delivered to any gentleman of that name and description, you will extremely oblige me by ordering it to be returned to me. It was sealed with my Arms ; and superscribed, “ James Dobbyn, Esq. at the Rev. Doctor Dobbin’s, Finglas.”

I am greatly concerned that I should give you so much trouble ; but you must perceive, Sir, the delicacy of my situation ; and your goodness, I hope, will accept it as my apology.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

LETTER XVI.

To the Rev. Thomas Philip Lefanu.

Dorset-street, June 21, 1811.

SIR,

A severe disability in my right-hand prevented me from the honor of sooner writing to you on the same distressing subject, with which I had hoped I should never again have cause to trouble you. But the late conduct of the family who had obliged me to trouble you before, has imposed a new task on me; and I have now to communicate the copy of a letter sent me some short time ago, subscribed *James Dobbyn*; together with my answer to that letter. I have likewise to communicate an original letter which I wrote to Doctor Dobbin on the occasion. You will find it, I hope, very different from that which Imposture had contrived; and such, I apprehend, as the Doctor should have attended to. It is necessary also I should let you know, that he detained a letter which he ought to have returned; and returned a letter which he ought to have acknowledged: in other words, that he opened a letter which was *not* addressed to him: but sent back, unopened, a letter that *was*.

Had the doctor, as any one acquainted with Good-manners would have done, acknowledged the letter addressed to *Himself*; and returned, as I had respectfully solicited, that addressed to *Another*; I should not now, Sir, have occasion to lay the transaction before you. The matter would have ended there, without further observation. Instead, however, of shewing both his Ignorance and his want of Manners by the return of my letter unopened, it would have been more becoming in him, had he expressed, in a letter of his own, his concern both for the Imposture itself and for the Breach of my Seal. If he did not know it before, he cannot now affect Ignorance,

I know but two ways of accounting for such departure from Politeness.—Either, Sir, through that Fatality which follows him as the shade pursues the substance: or, that he feared the *Retort Courteous*, and chose to infringe the private confidence of my pen, rather than meet my direct reprehension. If he has any better reasons to offer, I am willing to receive them.

For your clearer understanding of the letters, I have numbered them in the order they should be read; and particularly, Sir, I have opened the cover of the letter which I had written to the Doctor, lest your delicacy might hesitate to break a seal which Secrecy had imposed, and

Honor had rendered sacred. It is the letter itself that I had sent to him, the very same that his Weakness had returned. I assure you, Sir, upon my honor, that I have not even taken it from out of its original Envelope.

And here, Sir, I have to offer my concern for any thing that may give you pain in a Correspondence entirely unprovoked by me ; a Correspondence begun by themselves, and continued by their own act—the *Infractiō of my private Seal*. Not considering the letter suppositious, or that it had been contrived by them to extort an “Atonement,” as they called it, and Revocation of my Book, I could not foresee that they would break a seal which Confidence had secured: Neither, Sir, did I suspect that one could be found amongst them, who would overstep the laws which Society had established for its safety, in order to come at my *secret opinion* ; an opinion that should never have escaped my pen, put for their own unhandsome Imposture ; nor would even now have been divulged or known, but for the Curiosity that discovered it. I could not, therefore, have meditated any disrespect either to you, Sir, or to Miss Dobbin ; and I hope, although I do not wish or require your answer, you and she will do me the justice to believe, that I had not designed to offend. The offence lies entirely with those who pro-

voked it, and those only are answerable for it. The explanation is painful, and can give no pleasure to either of us: but I judged it necessary for my own reputation, lest to their Breach of Confidence they should have added a Breach of Truth, and misrepresented me to you.

I write in great pain, and fear you will find it difficult to make out my hand ; but I would not longer defer sending you the letters, or giving you the necessary information.

I cannot better than in this place request you will have the goodness to inform Miss Dobbin, that be my *discovered* opinion what it may, I do not believe she would either forge a letter, or infringe a seal. I am not disposed to judge so dishonorably of her. I request you will likewise assure her—and she knows I will no more break my word, than herself would break a seal—that should I find it necessary to make the transaction known, I shall do her all possible justice; and to the utmost of my power, shall acquit her to the world, both of the forgery itself, and the violation of the Wax.

But of her *Family* she must allow me to think very differently. When they reserved my answer, they assumed the forgery; when they broke my seal, they committed themselves with it:

what before was but a shadow, they substantiated; and legitimated that which might have passed for spurious. Like the Spear of Ithuriel—if angelic Virtue may be imputed to them—they touched the Toad into its native deformity; they gave truth to the falsehood, and by their own act gathered that falsehood to themselves. Meanwhile Iphigenia suffers; the victim, the *fated* victim of parental weakness! In Garlands and Fillets she is led bound to the altar, the Gaze and the Song of crowding Curiosity.

——*Pueri circum innuptæque puellæ
Sacra canunt.*

Agamemnon himself precedes the sacrifice; and instead of the Knife, her “Near and Dear “Relations” provide the Sword.—Nothing is wanting but the hand that shall plunge it in her bosom.

How far they may have succeeded in their object, they best understand: but to attain it, they were not solicitous about the means, whether by violated Faith or open Intimidation; little caring how much they exposed her, provided they might insult me with their Ill-manners, or fraudfully pry into the secrets of my breast.

But although I have not met them in the field, should I meet them in another place, I shall teach them a Morality, to which, at present, they appear to be strangers.

Talents I have never denied them. The letter from their Spanish Cousin is a proof of what they can perform ; and that, doubtless, is the best Ingenuity which succeeds the best. Its Speciousness, I own, deceived me ; but I was not the first on whom Imposture had been practised with success :

“ For let a man be ne’er so wise,
He may be caught by SOBER lies.”

And as its Speciousness deceived, so its Boldness secured it from detection, Its very Vulgarity gave it a cast of truth ; and if it produced not an “ Atonement,” it produced an Answer, as that Answer produced a *Discovery* ! The name of *Dobbin*, they well knew, would kindle my attention. It was a Talisman of Gun-powder : —a Touch would set it in a blaze. They knew also, that as it was not the first time I had been challenged by the name, the Imposture would be likely to succeed. One of them, not in forgery or mendacious defiance, but under her own authentic hand and seal, had warned my pen to repress its Sallies ; for that should it presume to write or make public any circum-

stance of or concerning her Sister, she had relations every where whom she would send out to have a shot at me :—" FIRE A SHOT," I think she called it. When, therefore, I beheld the doughty Nephew of her Father dressed up and deputed for the purpose, I naturally concluded the Lady had been as good as her word, and had procured some PHOENIX of her family to correct my presumption.—The whole is of apiece.

But in the plan they had contrived for *Me*, they over-looked the Lady contrived for *You* ; and never once took into account the injury they would do her, should I go out to defend with my Sword that which I had published with my Pen. No, Sir !—Tell Miss Dobbin there was a time,—and that time not long since passed —when I should have deemed fifty lives laid down for her sake, too few and insufficient : but tell her also * * * * *

No matter, Sir ;—let it go,—Tell her, that notwithstanding *Discoveries*, it would have pained me to the last hour of the life which is still left to me, had I yielded to my first impulse, and sacrificed her to their infatuated Politics.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

STRICTURE.

MY kind and respected friends, of whom I now take my leave, are entreated to believe and to bear in mind, that these papers had been sent to press, and the whole of them nearly printed off, before the marriage of Miss Dobbin had taken place, or been communicated to me. Unimportant as this circumstance may appear, it must not be over-looked, lest malignance should suppose that I had caused their publication through some invidious or other unworthy motive. Not enduring the suspicion, on the first intimation of her marriage, I determined, *instantly*, to suppress the work; and indeed I felt no wish to cloud or embitter the happiness she had hoped in the union which had been accomplished for her. I paused not a single moment; but in the generosity of my heart, wrote immediately to my printer, and assigning my reasons, countermanded the publication.

On the receipt, however, of a letter, which like that of Mr. James Dobbyn, was framed with a design to offend me, and to carry that offence to the extremest point of insult, I as speedily determined that the publication should go on: and disregarding every other consideration, directed the promptest dispatch. Should any delay ensue, my friends will impute it to those unavoidable causes which impede the Press of every printer, and retard the quickest motions of his Office.

The letter is written in a neat female hand, not wholly unconstrained, but expressed in happier language than that of their other letter fabricated in the same forge. As their conduct toward me has been marked with invariable insult, from my first proposal of alliance with the unprosperous family, to this the last effort of their Malice and Ill-manners, I have directed my printer to publish their new forgery, that they may not be partially understood, or judged of in detail. That conduct I now offer them the opportunity either of disclaiming, or of confirming it for ever by their acquiescence and submission. *Si Chartæ sileant, mercedem tulerint.* Their Silence will be their Shame; and that Shame their Reward.

The hand-writing of the letter extremely resembles that of the individual ladies of the family ; all of whose writing bears, like their minds, a conformity of character. The flames having destroyed their letters, I am not prepared to establish that conformity, or to determine the likeness of the present letter with their usual hand-writing : but as far as memory will allow, the letter in question is the very hand of the family ; or, to speak with more precision, the *family-hand*. Should, however, any lady or gentleman, acquainted with their writing, wish to compare the letter with an acknowledged one of their own, and will do me the favour to call upon me, I shall have great satisfaction in submitting it to their examination.

And here it is material to observe, that Miss Fitz-David carefully notes the precise hour of *Twelve* as the moment of the marriage. Now, by her extreme accuracy, and the assured manner in which she states *that* to be the hour, its truth must have been familiar to her : and to such correctness it was necessary also, that she should herself have been present at the ceremony, and even have felt an interest in the Event. To a person *not* interested, the specific hour was of indifferent concern, and its communication of idle account. The same may be said of the *Place* ; which, had Miss Fitz-David not been

one of the party, it was not likely she would have regarded ; and still less would have known, the Church of Finglas lying three miles in the Country, and out of the line of much resort ; or if much resorted, by Horned Cattle only. The same, indeed, might not be said of the populous parish of St. Mary, where a Sister of Miss Dobbin not long before had made her matrimonial *Debut* : but to Miss Fitz-David it was a matter of fact, and She found no difficulty to give under her hand the *Combinations of Time and Place*. Like Aristotle, She had studied the *Unities* ; and was as correct as that philosopher in her observance of them—" FINGLAS CHURCH AT TWELVE O'CLOCK."—When too she dwells so minutely on the hour that Miss Dobbin was clocked into happiness, it proves the importance which they had all attached to it, and how much the circumstance had pressed itself on their minds ; the absence of Doctor Dobbin having deferred the ceremony to the last of the Canonical Hours, and thereby thrown them into confusion and alarm.

I have been informed—but not being in the secrets of the family, cannot assure it by the Finglas-Clock ;—I have been informed, that much of their alarm arose from an apprehension that I should pounce upon them ; and by showing " just cause" where the ceremony

prescribes it, interdict the marriage. A moment's reflection—had that been the moment for it—would have told them, however, they had little to dread: I had previously repudiated the bride, and had expressly informed her Champion James that I should not molest her marriage, in as much as I had assigned her to Mr. Lefanu.* This they knew very well, having more than a month before read my determination in manuscript. But conscious how much they had incurred my displeasure, and how much too they were in my power, with the fears of children† they expected I would

* See Letter XIV. page 99

† That these childish fears had not been imputed to them without sufficient cause, a little Adventure, uninteresting in itself, yet important in its application, will serve to prove. Great characters are distinguished by great circumstances; but humble circumstances determine humble characters; and the following familiar Anecdote, which on any other occasion had not deserved regard, will set the present matter in its due light.

On the 25th. of last May I had walked to Finglas, not to visit Miss Dobbin, but to see a friend of hers who lives there. Passing near the Church, who should turn a corner, but Miss Dobbin and Mr. Lefanu?—They are arm in arm—they see me—they start—they hesitate—they loose their hold—and then—in the dread of meeting, and the hope of eluding me, accelerate their Steps to the retreat of a wall that stood out of the road.—Observing me to advance, and that should I introduce myself to them, they had no means of escape, off they set, and ran home faster than I had wishes to follow them. Should *Reporters*,

exercise that power, and up-set their triumph. And naturally enough : yet, had they known me as well by Character as they knew me by Contract, they could not have been ignorant that I had both too much spirit to take an advantage so ungenerous, and too much pride to accept a Wife at Second-hand. But the opportune arrival of the Doctor having dispelled their fears, and finding that they had *made assurance doubly sure*, their courage takes a new spring, and triumphantly proclaims a Victory that I had left to them !

My book is the *Touch-Stone of Truth*, and I would not endanger its veracity by the assertion of a fact to which I had not been witness, or which I did not know to be true. I give it therefore, as *Report* only, yet grounded on good authority, and such as I am bound to respect. To judge, however, of Cause by Effect, the assuming tone of their letter gives it a strong air of credit.

P 2

among their other Denials, deny *this*, I shall produce evidence of its truth.—This is the Protector, whose prowess was to muzzle me !—But I do assure Miss Dobbin, that she was in no more danger that I would have pounced upon her *near* the Church, than she was in danger that I should have pounced upon her *in* the Church.—The two Stories tell together as conclusively as Miss Fitz-David's Time and Place,

“ And each from each contracts new Strength and Light.”

But this is not all. The family had not required to be told, that the procrastination of a single day might be fatal: for had the hour of Twelve gone by, the marriage must have stood over till the next Canonical Hour should come round, and matters in the interval might take a new turn. They had not only to go through the Purgatory of their old fears, but had discovered, or their Reporters have much wronged them, that the History of their *Challenge* was on the eve of publication; and Laisus might not be in the humor of marrying to-morrow the Princess who had been so treasonably spoken of to-day. He had read my letter to the Champion of her Honor, and might hesitate: he might feel somewhat doubtful; he might not chuse *monstrari digito*, two Latin words which himself has translated for me, to be made "the distressing subject of public conversation." Like his name-sake in the Play, he might make a *Discovery*; and, to have done with my Greek, he might leave the Lady to her first Contract. Her old Knight had renounced her; and should her new one give her up, her friends might not with equal dexterity manage a third for her. They prudently, therefore, precipitated her marriage; and if report say true, (*Reporters* sometimes are very angry if we do not believe them,) were in such a hurry to get her off, that her new Knight had not time to provide for her:

which Improvidence, by the way, might have been managed to the same advantage, and with the very same facility, eight months before, had the same necessity then existed. But the Moon of Finglas was in her wane ; her lustre required Repair ; another month might eclipse it for ever ; and to preserve what yet remained of its Splendor, *New Light* must be added. They re-lumed her, therefore, with all due dispatch. And now that they had brought their management to bear, and that Laisus, like Macbeth, had *taken a Bond of Fate*, Miss Fitz-David is deputed in the Elation of their hearts to announce the Tidings of their Success ; hoping at the same time, that the certainty of that Success might induce me to suppress the Challenge ; as the other letter of Miss Dobbin had induced me to suppress the Memoirs, lest *that* publication should stand in the way of her preferment.

For these and other obvious reasons, Miss Fitz-David will be found to have been neither an indifferent Spectator nor an officious Intruder, but a Member of their own Council, that had shared in their alarm and in their triumph, in their fears and in their exultations, who had tasted the Spousal Cake, and was determined that I too should taste it. Is there now the person who will say, that it was a stranger, disinterested, and wholly unconnected with

Miss Dobbin and the circumstances of the day, who wrote me the letter in question? Or who would have ventured, without her concurrence and assent, to write me that insulting page which has called forth these observations? But which I should have remitted to the wretched family, but for the venom of the heart that took so much trouble to be malicious.

If these facts be not as I have stated them, those whom they concern can show how they differ from the truth: and when they show this, I hope they will disclaim all privity and knowledge whatever both of the letter and of its writer. If this they fail to do in the same open and unequivocating manner that I have charged and brought it home to their own parlour, their silence will prove, better than any argument of mine, that Miss *Fitz-David* is no other than Miss *Fitz-Dobbin*.

Be, however, my present opinion of Miss Dobbin what it may, I have no difficulty to own, that had I found her where I had left her; that is, in the sequestered Sanctuary of her father's house, to whose walls her unadulterated manners gave lustre and respect;—that house, those walls where her Love of retirement had first recommended her to my heart, and where her Virtues and unabated ardor after wisdom

and knowledge did subsequently endear her to me :—days, when her Ambition had not strayed beyond the may-pole in her village ;—days, when her Wishes like her walks were bounded by her own parochial meadows :—I do confess, that had I found her where I had left her, in the same innocent and undissipated Retirement, she would still have possessed my undiminished esteem ; and I should have felt a pang at losing a wife—*The Wife of My Soul*, as in my letters I had been used to call her—whom Nature and Education had so fitted for me. Our Habits, our Objects, our Tastes, our Studies, our Pursuits were THEN the same: in *these* there was no Disparity ; and their assimilation by identifying us in the same community of interests, would have assured to us the same reciprocated happiness. But the Serpent entered Paradise, and her father's Garden ceased to be Eden.* Those who took her from the Shade, and placed her in the Sun, have much to answer for ; and I have nothing to regret in the loss of her who became the *Eleve* of the Noted Calypso.†

These strictures would have appeared to far greater advantage in the preface, which had

* Miss Dobbin has not forgot that I had been used to call it by that name.

† See *Appendix* No. V.

been the proper place for them. But that part of the work was struck off, when Miss Fitz-David honored me with her correspondence: and I regret that the only place left for the Lady should be the Back-ground of the Picture; where she is likely to make a less conspicuous figure than her merit may be found to deserve.

What I had remarked in the Sixteenth letter, (page 109) will conclude these papers better than any thing new which I am able to offer; viz.—“THE WHOLE OF THEIR CONDUCT IS OF A PIECE.”

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

August 3d, 1711.

LETTER XVII

Miss Fitz-David to Mr. Swift.

SIR,

HAVING read your publication respecting Miss Dobbin, I have the pleasure to inform you that her Marriage with Mr. Lefanu was solemnized yesterday morning in Finglas Church at Twelve o'Clock: and in order that you may indulge yourself with a pleasant dream, I enclose a piece of the Bride-cake, &c. &c.*

Wishing you every consolation under so heavy an affliction,

I am sir,
with great respect,
your humble servant

FITZ-DAVID.

Thursday August 1, 1811.

* The Bride-Cake was surmounted with a Trophy of White Ribband.

APPENDIX.

Advertisement.

I HAVE to apologize for the length of this Appendix, upon whose extent I had not calculated when I noticed its brevity, in page 27. The truth is, that when I told my friends I should not burthen them with long or unnecessary annotations, no part of the Appendix, with the exception of Number iv, had been composed; and I had not then estimated the fulness of the References I should be obliged to make. It was unfortunate : but so it stood, when my printer reminded me it was high time I should put the appended materials into form.

While these were under composition, several observations pressed themselves upon me, which though in themselves not very long, were yet not unnecessary. Many passages required explanation, on some of which, it is hoped, a little light has been thrown; while others, it is feared, will ever remain but half-unfolded, or beheld as through a darkened glass. They cannot now be *satisfactorily* cleared up, through the loss of those papers which Miss Dobbin and myself had destroyed, in the moment that I imagined the unkindness of her family had disappeared.

That unkindness is one of the things which principally requires explanation, but for which I confess myself unable to account, as I had never in thought, in word, or in deed offended any of them; not supposing that a wish to marry Miss Dobbin was a Crime; or that she had sinned in having deemed it none.

To have had *some*, at least, of the darker passages cleared up, the most effectual mode had been their own Answer to my book. Between us much truth might have been elicited, and many circumstances brought to light that would have illustrated others, and uncloaked the obscurity of the whole. Admitted facts would have supplied the place of proofs, and inevitable conclusions have followed from those admissions. But this they discreetly avoided, deeming it more scriptural to turn the other cheek; though had they minded the scripture a little more, *These things had not been done in a Corner*. Had they come to the point at once, and discovered a disposition to meet the facts in acknowledged day, they would have found me less their enemy than their friend: I should have met them more than half way, and like the long-absent Bird, have greeted them with returning regard: whether wisely, or weakly, is not here the question. But as I would not monopolize the Press, so I would not monopolize the Truth, of which the

Press is the Organ ; or, by a familiar figure, the *Speaking-Trumpet* : and therefore I beseech them by that friendship I once had for them all, and which I had never violated, not to force me by Whispers and dark Abnegations into a fourth Edition.—My Nature has better thoughts ; I would not *mill* them : but had rather say with old *Entellus*,

Hic Cæstus artemque repono.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

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APPENDIX.

Page 13. *Burthened her Escritoire with them for so many years.*] The following, as I am credibly informed, is the answer which the ci-devant Miss Jane Dobbin gives, for her Sister, to this provoking question : viz. “ That it is not true her Sister had preserved my letters: for that she had left them in the Card-racks and on the Mantel-piece in the common parlour.”

There is something so confident, yet so ridiculous, in this Tale of wonder, that it deserves no better notice than a Smile ! Nevertheless, as the Tale has been roundly told, I as roundly ask this same ci-devant Miss Jane Dobbin a few intelligible questions.

1st. And first, Madam, had your Sister left my letters for common inspection in the Card-racks of her parlour, you will please to assign the reason that her Father should have entertained so much dread and apprehension of their becoming public ?

2d. Had my Letters contained nothing which might not be confided to a Card-rack, why did he resist so many indignant applications

for them? Why keep such fearful, such tenacious possession? Why so jealous of their inoffensive pages?

3d. How happened it, that her family should have averred so often, and boasted to their friends, that your Sister was in possession of innumerable Documents of my affection and promises of marriage,* had she left such Documents to the precarious security of a Card-rack?

4th. Had my letters been silent on the subject; had their gilded edges served only to decorate a Card-rack; why did her father not publish them at once? Would they not have been a full and complete disproof of the Contract, and the best Vindication also of his beloved Daughter? Was it my *literary*, or my *moral* reputation that was dearer to him than the *Honor of his House*? He denies that he detained them as *Hostages*; but he does not deny the *Contract* itself, or the Truths contained in their impassioned pages.

5th. On the 27th. of November, 1810, (I have yet the letter of that date) your Sister apprized me, she had that morning committed to the flames the confidential letter which I had written her six years before; that is, on the

* See Letter IV. page 48

fifth of September, 1804. You will find it alluded to in the question which follows, that of the *Escritoire*. But I would here ask you two unambiguous questions, to either of which your answer will be sufficient.

During the whole of those six years, had this same confidential letter been sticking in a Card-rack?

Was it preserved, during that period, in the Sanctum of your Sister's *Escritoire*?

Your Truth, I am certain, will find a ready answer. But pray inform us, how this same Tenant of a Card-rack, this volant and fugitive Leaf, which your Sister, we are told, had disclaimed and abandoned as of no account, should, *after a Lapse of Six years*, find its way to her Writing-table? And whether a letter, whose fate she had recorded with such distinguished and favored notice, was proper to ornament a Card-rack?

6th. It is far from my wish to offend Her whose worth and truth I had once so respected; but had the *Weakness* of your Sister left my unfortunate Correspondence in the Card-racks of her parlour, how will you account for her *Candor* in affecting to return that Correspondence as undiminished and entire as she had originally received it? conscious as she must have been, that she had not preserved it unimpaired, but

had exposed its detached pages to annual and diurnal depredation. For the sake of that injured and once-beloved sister, I will not credit the account you give of her.

7th. Had that once-beloved Sister left these Documents of my Heart's Truth in the Card-racks of her parlour, could she be very certain that in the course of six or seven years, no Hand but her own had touched them; no Finger had purloined, no Curiosity had pocketted, no Wind had waisted any one of them from its place; but that they had all abided stationary and immoveable, during that whole period; and that (you understand a little Latin) *Quæcunque in chartis descripsi, illa manent immota locis*?—Will your once-ingenuous, your once-respected Sister aver this? And if she will not, shall another be allowed to aver it for her? But should her new Morality have taught her no better Lesson, where will you direct us to find her *Integrity*? Is it to be looked for in Card-racks? Or shall we brush it from a Mantel-piece? Ah Madam! your assertion proves more than you had intended, or expected that it would: for, if all her Family, all her Friends, all her Neighbours, all her Visitors, all her Domestic;—if these, and all others, had at all times and seasons free access to, and the handling and the turning of these Documents, how, I beseech you, could the

Good Faith of her whom I had then so esteemed, have restored them to me as the unviolated records of my Affection ;—the unmutilated pages of my Truth and Affiance ;—the unaltered, and unalterable Vows of that marriage which my Heart, my wronged and wounded Heart, had so often made her ? Do not say, Madam, that notwithstanding this insurmountable argument, these sacred Hostages of my Honor, these solemn Pledges of my Heart more than of my Pen, might yet have been mounted on a Mantel-piece, or stuck in the *Laminæ* of her Card-racks, for that—must I, Madam ?—must I speak it ? —A BREACH OF GOOD FAITH HAD NOT BEEN UNFAMILIAR TO HER.—The Argument would come with a better grace from any other lips than your own.

8th. And where shall be found the *Consistence* of Her whose steadiness I had been used to admire, in pertinaciously refusing for so many months to restore these vital Pledges of my heart, *lest I should print and exhibit them to the world*, had Herself, Madam, been daily in the habit of publishing them to all Comers and Goers ? No, no : The Invention of the Card-racks was to screen the Contract, and have it supposed that nothing of the sort had ever existed between us. It is difficult to account in any other way for as notable a Fable, without its *Moral*, as any I remember to have met with.

9th. One other question, and I will dismiss you: I am sure you will thank me for it. Don't be afraid; it has nothing to do with the *Card-racks*.—When you were denying the question of the *Escritoire*, why did you not deny the *first*, and dispose of *that* before you had proceeded to the second? And why did you stop at the second, without advancing on the remaining eight? Should you make no better hand of the nine you have left undisposed of, or of the two others which are introduced into the present Edition for the exercise of your ingenuity, be assured, Madam, your unfortunate Sister will find little to applaud in the zeal of her advocate. But should you manage the nine questions now first propounded to you, no better than you have managed the only one of the ten, which you had ventured to touch;—and should all your other assertions, together with those of your Whisperers and Reporters, be no better founded than that whose fallacy I have just exposed;—Be assured again, the Truth of these papers will live and continue, when the Efforts employed to silence and discredit them shall have perished and passed away.

It was natural however, that you should have defended the Honor of your deluded Sister in the best manner it had allowed. Your management had brought her into all her difficulties;

and it was but fair that your management should take her out of them. To that management she had owed the easy Violation of her Faith, and the yet easier Frustration of her *Honorable Intent*.^{*} A little Kindness, a little Politeness, a little Explanation, against which, however, you took care to close the door, might have accommodated matters in a way more satisfactory to us all, and less discreditable to *some*. Nor is it, perhaps, the least of the misfortunes which have marked and invariably pursued your ill-fated family, unto the present hour of the words of my pen, that through your miserable management and enflaming counsels, they should have courted my resentment, and combined, and *determined* to insult me; that they should have labored to offend, and even have defied and *challenged* the man, whose pen, they well knew, was his armour; his only armour against the concerted, but unprovoked assaults of inveterate and associated Enemies.—*Dux Fœmina Facti*.

^{*} See pages 21 and 22. There unfortunately happens in pages 21 and 23 a typographical Error, which occasions some little confusion. The pen, however, will easily correct these unavoidable mistakes.

No. II.

Page 17. *Her delicacy omitted to touch the Subject?*] It is singularly curious that Miss Dobbins Letter* should assume the air of an original communication; as if *that* had been the first and only time that I had proposed or mentioned Marriage to her; or as if neither the Contract itself, nor its Obligation, had been pressed upon her, or had formed any part whatever of the only question then between us.

It is worthy also of remark, that Miss Dobbin should observe the strictest silence respecting the confidential friend, to whom at that very moment she was entrusting the impassioned Deposits of my Heart, and committing the care and management of her own letter to myself: which letter, by the way, it has lately come out, her friend had himself counselled and advised, as the only means of arresting my resentment, and keeping from Mr. Lefanu the knowledge of her Contract with me.† Owing, however, to

• Letter IX.

† It has lately come out also, that this confidential friend was sitting at Miss Dobbin's Elbow during the whole of the time that the pen was in her hand,

some accident, she forgets to mention her confidential Ambassador, on the success of whose negotiation depended all her hopes!

And this is the more extraordinary, because her Ambassador was to keep the matter a profound secret: and, should my information be true, that secret he faithfully kept till it ceased to be one; that is, until after I myself had applied in Cuffe-street for an explanation. What happened upon that discovery, or how Miss Dobbin's friend settled it with Mr. Lefanu, and accommodated that Gentleman to her, I never heard or enquired: but this is certain, Miss Dobbin became extremely alarmed, lest, should it reach the ear of her new lover that she was adjusting the circumstance of an old Contract, that new lover would leave her to that old Contract, and abandon his own inchoate Engagement, which hung, *then*, in fearful and hesitating uncertainty.

With the permission of my friends, I shall state for their information, and as briefly as I can, one or two other facts connected with the present circumstance. They will tend to throw much light on the general subject.

My pen is unable to describe the anxiousness of Miss Dobbin's confidential friend, when I

entered on the subject of the Contract,* and told him I had determined to enforce it. He was, however, far more collected than myself. My own agitation exceeded all measure.

And now he produced Miss Dobbin's Letter.—In an instant I disdained to touch it.—My words, as he presented the letter, are fresh on my memory.—“No, Sir!—No!—Take it back to her!—Tell her there was a time my Heart would have sprung from my bosom to receive a letter from

* On the subject of the Contract, as mentioned in the text, I had before conferred with Miss Dobbin's confidential friend, though I did not *then* know him in that character. But it is here proper to observe, that the present conversation took place on the 21st. of November, 1810; that on the 18th. I had heard, for the first time, that Miss Dobbin had entered into a new Contract; that on the 19th. it had been communicated to Miss Dobbin's friend, that the circumstance of her late Contract had reached my knowledge, and that she had every thing to apprehend from my resentment; that on the 20th. her confidential friend repaired to Finglas, and apprised her of her danger; that he then suggested to her the expedience of her losing no time in writing me an appeasing letter; that in concert with that friend, she composed the letter whose date it bears; and that on the 21st. her confidential friend brought me the letter so composed.

These little circumstances are highly important: *united*, they become irresistible Evidence: and though dates are often unattended to, and set at small account, they are always essential in the investigation of *Truth*.

her.—Tell her, I think more unhandsomely* of her *now*, than I had done an hour ago.—Tell her I will write to Mr. LEFANU, and acquaint him with her Conduct !”

At the name of Mr. Lefanu, the Solicitude that had embarrassed his cheek, changed suddenly into dismay: and after some mild expostulations on his part, and as many angry answers on mine, he returned the Letter to his pocket, and we parted.

On advising with my friends, and apprehending that in my indignance, I had transgressed the bounds of gallantry and politeness, about midnight, (for I could not bring myself to do it sooner) I dispatched a hasty note to Miss Dobbin's friend; telling him I would receive her letter, if he had not returned it; but that if he had, I would accept any other she might write me.

He had not seen Miss Dobbin, for it was nearly dark when he left Dorset-street: but at an early hour in the morning he sent her letter to me, enclosed in a very kind one of his own. I was alone when I found it on the table. I read it with various Emotion, till she touched my feelings

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* The word that I used was not *unhandsomely*; but one of a disrespectful nature, which I trust my friends will pardon me for not inserting in this place.

with "the propriety of *harbouring* toward her no other sentiments than those of friendly wishes for her happiness." The appeal was so movingly made, so delicately addressed to my tenderness and generosity, That, as every word which composed her letter possessed a spell for my heart, *hers* I resolved to leave at rest, and not to obstruct her happiness in the new Contract She had formed.

But happy her relations would not suffer her to be. As her unmannered family would owe nothing to my politeness,* so they had resolved to owe as little to my kindness, or to the immense sacrifice I had made. They had declared their "united determination" to disappoint me; and having accomplished that object, they cared and they looked no farther. In solitary silence, however, and for the sake of her toward whom I had ceased to harbour resentment, I resolved to keep my sorrows to myself, and to breathe not a murmur more that should disquiet their peace, when their triumphant Equivocations started me from my Dream! And now rousing from the Illusion that had mocked me, and shaking the Dew-drops from the mane of the Lion, I found it high time to look about me, and to enquire into the Fact, *and its Truth*, from Mr. Lefanu himself.

* See pages 58 and 61.

After this statement, few will enquire—I say it with respect—What had been the motive of Miss Dobbin for writing a propitiatory letter, *at the end of five months*, to the very man with whom she had broken Faith, and was then at open and “determined” war? To the man himself whose correspondence she had insultingly renounced; and who on account of that very insult, had just before* astounded the Father of her affection with an alarming letter; a letter which had produced tremendous effects! and struck consternation into the hearts of them all! —That Father, whom she had worshipped nearly with the same adoration which she paid to her Father that is in Heaven; and whom to offend, had been equal blasphemy in her sight, and the sin as little to be forgiven.—Was it filial Piety, that caused her to do such violence to her feelings? My Friends, and every other Friend to Truth, know what interpretation to put upon it.

This is the short history of a long Tale. Should my friends have found it tedious, they have found also a clue to the Labyrinth, which, though neither so long nor so certain as Ariadne’s thread, yet, as far as it extends, will serve to guide them through the *dark passages* of my pen.

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* See Letter VIII.

Something of the sort many of my friends had required, and even judged necessary; but it had not been proper to break in upon the text, or to oppress its page with marginal explications: and I had deemed it better that some few circumstances should continue in unimportant obscurity, than that they should all be explained by appended annotations; which, though not calculated to mislead, are sure to distract, and even to abate a portion of that pleasure which results from an uninterrupted perusal.

But it may be said, that my Letter to Miss Dobbin, to which her's is the answer, is obscure. It is indeed a tissue of Obscurities. But herself had been able to unravel them all, and was sensible that I could not venture to be more explicit, without endangering the object I had in view.* Her family had thrown every obstacle in my way. They had bound me fast in the Strait-waste-coat of their politics, and then pushed me to walk with a bare foot on the edge

* So necessary was it, in addressing Miss Dobbin, to observe a respectful obscurity, that we see by her father's first letter, how much the subject had curdled the milk of his Heart. I must repeat here what I had lately said before, that until I received his insulting letter, for which I am even yet unable to account, I had never offered the slightest offence whatever, either to himself or to any one of his family.—I loved *Emma*: and had extended my affection to them all.

of a razor. The whole, however, of that embarrassed letter may be explained in a few lines: viz. That I had loved Miss Dobbin with long and unaltered affection :---that she had encouraged my earliest and my latest hopes, and that I now expected the reward of my fidelity, could she remove the prejudices of her relations: that the period had arrived to which we had each looked, and that I was ready to fulfil the promises my heart had so often made her.—— All this she could not but understand; and her family understood it also, though I was obliged to offer the Honied Cake to Cerberus. My friends will *now* understand it: and the explanation will be a sufficient key to the obscurities of my letter, whose mysteries it unlocks, without breaking its Seal, or violating its Confidence.

No. III.

Page 24. *The gentleman which had been managed for her.*] Notwithstanding this full, and I had hoped, satisfactory explanation, the same mendacious Babblers continue to report the same mendacious falsehood : as if Pertinacity could make that true which is false ; or Perseverance in error alter the nature of right and wrong. This I term *Holiday Honor*, and its Morality is suited to its wearers. Had the Employers of these Reporters understood the value of Truth, or had they not dreaded its investigation, they would long ago have *challenged* me to the question, in the same unwhispered manner that I had charged THEM with the falsehood. It was material to their reputation that they should not have succumbed in silence ; and they had time enough to shape and prepare their answer, could they have ventured upon it with security.

I respectfully acquaint Miss Dobbin, that I have *broke no Faith* with her ; that I have committed no *Breach of Honor* toward her ! She knows that I have not. But I inform her mendacious Reporters, that should any of them be

Clergymen, who have presumed to assert in any Hole or in any Corner, that I infringed a promise which I had made her, and published a work which I had undertaken to suppress, such Clergymen are not acquainted with the nature of Truth, nor have practised that which they affect to preach; but that they have gone about scattering false charges, and bearing false witness against their virtuous neighbour.—Should any of them be Lay-men, I acquaint such her mendacious Whisperers and Scatterers of false charges, that the truth is neither in their hearts nor on their lips; and that they are deficient in that principle which distinguishes men of *Honor* from men of *Report*; that although themselves may have no character either to lose or to preserve, yet that they should respect those who have; that I have some character to sustain, and one too that I value; and that I would perish rather than lose it by PERFIDY!

Should any Bablers for Miss Dobbin feel themselves comprehended in the present observation, they are acquainted with my address; and whatever morning they may chose to appoint, they will find me at home to receive their commands.

It is difficult to prove a negative; and to require impossibilities, would be unreasonable. But were it necessary to establish the mendacity

of these Reporters, one Circumstance would fix them with it. Before they can assert, with even the semblance of truth, that I have broke my word with Miss Dobbin, and published that which I had promised her to suppress, they must be very sure that they had read the Memoirs in manuscript; and that the manuscript which they had so read is the work itself which I published. Unless they do this, their Babbling will go for no more than it is worth. Nor is this all; they must prove the work so published to be

MEMOIRS
OF THE
DOBBIN FAMILY,
BEGINNING WITH ENNISKILLEN,
AND
ENDING IN SHIP-STREET.

For such was its Title, and such its Tendency. They must do more; they must prove this paradox, That what is *permissory* is *monitory*; or else, that I had published the *monitory*, instead of the *permissory* letter; and suppressed the

permissory, and sent the *monitory* to Mr. Lefanu. There is also another difficulty with which I must bring them acquainted : let them get over it as they can.

At the time that I promised Miss Dobbin to suppress the memoirs and monitory letter, I had neither composed, nor had in contemplation to compose, the work which I *did* publish. Neither was it within human possibility, that a book which did not exist, and was not then so much as thought of, could have been *suppressed*, or *undertaken* to be suppressed :—a book too, that would never have been composed at all, but for the Masked-Battery which themselves had afterward opened upon me ; when their own Subterfuges and low Reservations forced me for an explanation on Mr. Lefanu, and compelled me under that explanation to rescue the Honor of my Character. I call upon these Babblers for Miss Dobbin to deny the fact ; leaving, as I do, *Folly* and *Falsehood* to those who find them their best, and their only Advocates.

Miss Dobbin's confidential friend cannot forget, and I am sure he will do me the justice to own, that although I had refused to shew him the Manuscript of the Memoirs, yet that I had mentioned to him, as forming a part of *that* work, a Phœnomenon which I had met with in old *Lithgow*. The Phœnomenon was that of

two Sister-streams in the neighbourhood of *Candia*,* which, notwithstanding that they issued from the same source, and that in their progress they nearly touched one another, retained opposite qualities; the one being extremely sweet, the other extremely bitter. He will recollect also, that I told him I had applied this piece of Natural History to Emily and Jane Dobbin.

Now, I should be glad that some one of these Babblers would *report* to us, in which page of the book that I published this Phenomenon is to be found? Had it been possible that two works, wholly differing in their matter and in their manner, in their means and in their end; and as distinct also in their *qualities* as the two Sister-streams themselves;—Had it been possible that two such discordant and dissimilar works could have been one and the same composition, the *Morceau*, as the French Critics term it, had been too *applique*, that I should have ejected it from the place it so happily fitted. I should have lost an apt and apposite allusion, that had equally embellished my page and illustrated its argument. Those who have harrowed as much as I have ploughed, know the value of the Corn which they sow, and toil only to reap the

* The principal City in Crete.

harvest of their industry : and the Jeweller will not spurn the Pearl that Fortune had thrown in his way, or his own Diligence had found and polished to his purpose. It was a Star in my Book ; which, though not a Comet, was new ; and its absence, had my weakness cast it from its conspicuous station, would have left a void which I must have filled up with Stars of another sort—the *Asterisks* of a Printing-office.—If Miss Dobbin's Reporters would *think* a little before they *speak*, they would serve the cause of their Employer to far greater advantage.

No. IV.

Page 45. *I wrote her a hasty but affectionate Letter.*] I call it a *hasty* letter, for such it was. The report had that instant reached me; and that instant also I was speeding out of town. Alarmed, I snatched up my pen; but in my hurry and perturbation, wrote her one of the most confused and incorrect letters I had ever put out of my hand; agitated as my heart, embarrassed every where, and tautological throughout. It was this circumstance, though he did not then know it, which occasioned me to say to her father, speaking of a passage in the letter, "If I expressed it *ungracefully*, it was not therefore unintelligible:" and again, speaking of the letter itself, "If deficient in Eloquence, it was strong in Sincerity."* I would print it at large, were it not incorporated with other matters as *unpleasant* as they had been *private*: but Miss Dobbin need only to express her wish through some one of her *Reporters*, that it may be made public, and I faithfully undertake in the next edition to make *honorable mention* of it.

* See pages 46 and 47.

The Letter, as I have said, had been written under great agitation. On folding it up, some half dozen mistakes, which my pen as I went on had amended, arrested my eye: The amendments themselves were amended, as the letter yet evinces. Its pages disfigured, its emendations disrespectful, I hesitated whether I ought not in politeness to write it over again. Time pressed; but convenience gave way, and I transcribed in haste that letter which Miss Dobbin was to read at leisure, but to which I then little imagined I should ever have occasion to refer. Hurrying out of town, I threw the disfigured copy, with some other papers then on my table, not into the fire, but into a Drawer; and locking them up, never after asked myself the question, whether I had, or had not the manuscript? My heart was too full of the *Substance*, to bestow a thought on the *Shadow*; and it reposed in its *Sanctum*, till Miss Dobbin's silence to my letter of the second of June, occasioned me to search the Drawer for another purpose. Not caring about it, I had not indorsed it, as is my custom with papers of consequence; but taking it up, and supposing it some idle Scrip that had strayed from its place, I found it to be the very letter now in question. Instantly it brought the several circumstances to my recollection, though I require no Filip to remind me of the minutest article, even of dates and

hours, to which Miss Dobbin and myself have at any time been a party. It accounts, however, for my present possession of this solitary, but now not *unnecessary* letter.

I have been obliged to dwell longer on this slovenly and ill-written epistle than it deserved, the Doctor having most logically inferred, that because I had happened to possess *this* solitary effusion, I had taken copies of *all* the letters I had ever written Miss Dobbin! As if I had deemed the prompt, and always impetuous scribbles of my pen deserving of commemoration; or had cared about them once that I was sure they had reached her hand;—I had almost said, reached her *Heart*. No, no, Doctor! To have copied them, had been to copy my whole heart, and to transcribe impressions as indelible as the Fidelity it had vowed was immutable.

The Doctor—I thought he had known me better—requires to be told, and Emily could have informed him—that I write always, as I write now, *currente calamo*, and seldom draw breath till I get to my journey's end. With the exception of a few Letters on high and important business; and with the exception also of a certain "Recent Correspondence" with my Finglas friends, my letters to whom politeness

had induced me to transcribe, I do not possess, and would burn them if I did possess, the half of half a dozen copies of the thousands of Letters that I have written in my life. I ask pardon of my friends for this protracted account of an idle letter and its careless author: but I judged it necessary that they should understand how it came to pass that the transcription of a letter, seemingly so unimportant, should have survived to the present hour. Its *Ungracefulness* is the best proof that if it hath continued to exist, *Accident* alone could have preserved it.

But of this solitary letter I have not yet disposed.—Alluding to the *report*, for it turned out to be nothing more, the letter says, “This Intelligence of your approaching marriage extremely shocked and surprised me.”—It naturally shocked, it naturally surprised me, because I could not have expected it.—The Surprise was sudden as the Shock: between the Flash and the Clap was no pause. The letter, the *whole* of it, was written in confidence. It *conditioned terms*: in that confidence she retains the pledges, the *conditioned* pledges of my affection and fidelity.—She in fact assures me I have no cause of surprise, for that she is not, as in truth she was not, encouraging any other gentleman. The circumstance is very material; and may be referred to those passages in the

first and second Introduction where mention is made of this confidential and most explicit Letter.* *Solitary* indeed! but bearing the unequivocal marks and tokens of something beyond an *implied* Contract;—The Impression itself of HONOR, the very Image and Superscription of TRUTH.

* See note in page 4, and pages 12, 14, and 20.

No. V.

Page 119. *Who became the Eleve of the Noted Calypso.*] Did we not know from the highest authority, that God had made man after his own likeness, *Nature*, which is only God declared in his works, proclaims its divine truth to the whole earth. Before the Passions have entered our hearts, and taken possession of them, a sagacious observer, if his mind's eye be good, shall discern in the human countenance the lustre of original Innocence. When Moses came down from the Mount, his face shone; for his conversation had been with God. Some faces Nature has lighted with distinguished splendor; and once I was happy in the smile of an highly-favored Lady, whose Brow resembled that of Heaven, as if Heaven had illumed it for the delight and the instruction of Man. Her Mind was the Beauty of Innocence, and her Face was the Mirror of that Mind: it was indeed the Image of Him that made it.— It did not dazzle:—it was the mild radiance of the Morn; but that radiance he must have had a bad heart who could behold without

emotions of respect.—Such was its power over me, that Miss Dobbin was the only Human Being before whom I had ever, for a single moment, stood in awe! It is now seven years since I last told her so; but not the less true on that account; and I have not forgotten an expression in one of my unfortunate Letters:—“I never can look steadily at you: You awe my very Soul.”—My words I remember well; because her countenance was divine, and on my very Soul its Divinity had impressed its Seal.* That Heaven which it resembled can attest the Holy Devotion it commanded of my Heart; and never yet had Brahmin kneeled to *Mithra* with a purer or more exalted Zeal, than that affectionate Heart had bowed to her unclouded Sun.—Those who

* I cannot too often observe, that neither the Splendor which the text attributes to Miss Dobbin's countenance, nor the Effect produced by that Splendor, are feigned: Fancy hath no share in them. Her face was ineffably divine: it shone: for her conversation had been with Innocence. I have too much respect for the Book of Eternal Life, to treat with levity its sacred and important truths; but I could no more behold without awe the *Lumen* of Miss Dobbin's countenance, than the children of Israel could behold that of Moses, when “they were afraid to come nigh him.” If ever I had the Wish, I have not now the Temptation to flatter: I gain nothing by having its truth believed, but I hazard much should it be discredited. I sum it up, therefore, in this short but solemn declaration, That my own faithful Eyes had beheld it; and that my own faithful Heart had felt it.

knew Miss Dobbin before her *Elevation*, will own that I have not added a Ray to the Heaven that beamed on her Brow.

With the same fidelity of pencil, the same fearlessness of Truth, I observe, but observe with infinite concern, that when this correct and admirable Lady exchanged the Sanctuary of her father's Walls, and the Paradise of his garden, for the Bower of Calypso, the Splendor of her countenance went down: other Passions entered her heart, discomposed it, changed it; and in that change dimmed the Human Face Divine. In vain we look for Original Brightness: we find there Glory obscured, not eclipsed, but fading fast into that cloud whose Fatality over-hangs them all, and darkens their unfortunate days!—Those who know Miss Dobbin Now, will confess that I have not deepened the Shade.

In these Observations—I speak it with the strictest truth—I have not been governed by any flourish of Fancy, or affectation of Wit; and still less by the remembrance of past Affection, or the feelings of present Disappointment. If pain of any sort I feel, that pain arises out of the Moral, the bitter and afflicting

Moral which it offers to Man. My fair Readers, I trust, will profit by its salutary lesson ; nor deem that *Novel* of light account, whose Characters, though not pourtrayed by the hand of a Clarendon, are drawn from real life, and still exist to instruct by their example : but above all, by setting before the young mind The IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH, and the BEAUTY OF ORIGINAL INNOCENCE.

THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

FINIS.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING concluded my book, it was not my wish to add another word: but that I may not be supposed to have gilded a tale, or ascribed an imaginary splendor to the Brow of her whom I had loved with such transcendent affection, with the leave of my friends I shall present them with a *Proof-impression* of its truth, as far as that Impression is capable of proof.

My page has been the field of war: Should I strew it with a few unexpected Flowers, or plant an Olive by the side of a Thistle, the friends of Humanity will not think the worse of the *Man*, howsoever they may judge the *Bard*, whose Pegasus had run away with him. But they will forgive the unbridled impetuosity of his speed, when they are informed, that the lines with which I shall have the honor to present them, were birthed in the instant of conception, under the influence itself of that unclouded Sun, whose truth it is the object of this Postscript to establish. Their Irregularity, their Incoherence, their *Obscurity*, notwithstanding the Splendor to

which they had owed their birth, are so many proofs of the fact. But I neither offer them as a *Morceau*, nor would defend their defects: their wildness I acknowledge, not determining the boundaries of Poetic Licence, nor disputing whether Bellerophon in his flight had reached the confines of Reason, or had o'er-leapt the *Flammantia Mania* of Poetry. The lines are not worth the disquisition.

Miss Dobbin was in a Ball-room.—It was past the noon of Night.—She had sat down, and was resting her arm on the back of a chair.—I was sitting opposite, at a short distance. Her Countenance had acquired new lustre from the pleasure of the evening.-- It resembled the first Break of the Dawn;—when, like the Brahmin described above, my Devotion refrained only from prostrating itself at her feet. Well for us both, that I did not fall down and worship her!

Star of my Soul! Whose bright ascendant power
Marked the sure fortunes of my natal hour!
Fair Planet of my fate!—I feel thee now!—
Thine influence rushes, to its rule I bow!
And awed with all a Brahmin's prostrate Zeal,
Before thy Beauty's Sun devoutly kneel.

Here lowly as I bend, and turn to thee—
O would'st thou turn one tender look on me!

To the fair Heaven of thy unclouded day
 Affection pours the consecrated lay.
 Warm from the heart it flows!—Hear, Emma, hear!
 The Vow comes watered with a gushing tear!
 Delightful drop, if thou accept the strain!
 A drop of Pleasure in a Fount of Pain!

* * * * *

* * * * *

Star of my Hope! Sweet Harbinger of Peace!
 At whose approach the Mourner's Sorrows cease.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Star of each gentle, each exalted grace,
 That dignifies the Soul, or decks the Face!

* * * * *

* * * * *

Lamp of my Love!—'Tis Heaven that lights the Vow!
 And Love and Heaven have lighted all thy brow!
 Sun of my Soul!—Thy Splendors warm the lay:—
 The Beams of Rapture round the poet play:—
 Their Lightnings kindle, and their Rapture rings,
 Love hears, and leaps for joy, and claps his purple wings:
 Through my fired frame the headlong transports roll,
 And agitate the Bard, and harmonise his soul.*

* Having lost the paper-slip on which I had set down the Lines when I returned home, I have depended for their correctness on a memory that never was a good one, and verbally was always bad. They had consisted of several others, that have left not a wreck in recollection.—The Ball occurred on the twenty-ninth of October, 1806:—days and hours, as I have said, had been engraven on my heart:—

Nor were these the only numbers her unclouded Sun had that night inspired. I am not an *improviser* poet: neither do I admire the affectation that prides itself on unpremeditated metres. They deserve no higher name; and are always inferior to those happy efforts which Judgement has disciplined, and Taste and Patience have corrected. But to convince my friends that I have not led them an illusory Dance, I shall offer them another Olive, that grew and flourished under the same auspicious Sky. The Song that I shall sing them possesses less fire, is less unconnected, and less precipitous than the abrupt lines they have just read; for Pegasus had run his first heat, and like other jades, had broke down. In its measured Stanzas, whose original now lies before me, there is a method and sedateness that ill accord with disordered Dithyramb, and constitute therefore more legitimate poetry. But as the first and last of these Stanzas allude to the "Heaven" which had that night more immediately

and I find myself at midnight writing this account of it on the twenty-ninth of October, 1811. At the end of five years, every hour of which has been edged by some keen reflexion, or barbed with some bitter thorn, I may be allowed to forget a few evanescent Verses! But be the events of that period good or evil, whether as they affect the unhappy family, or as they apply to myself, none of us, I apprehend, will hastily forget the *LAST YEAR OF THE LUSTRUM*.

illuminated her Brow, I am induced to trouble my friends with this *second* specimen of its power—Miss Dobbin was dancing at the time : and it was a *Charity-Ball*, in the very Village where I had first beheld---and first had loved her.

S O N G.

1

How sweet is my Emma ! How graceful and fair !
Her Brow is all Heaven !---What Divinity there !
Through the dance as she moves, like the Star of the night,
An Angel she seems, robed in *Charity's* white.

2

Be still, O my heart !—What is Emma to thee ?
Or why should her Presence give transport to me ?
What means this wild Tumult, that throbs in my breast ?
O Love, 'tis thy pulse:—wilt thou ne'er be at rest ?

3

Break, break, foolish heart !—No ; go tell her once more
Thy Sorrow's sad tale, and her pardon implore :
Not long in that bosom can Anger abide,
And *Pity* is still on sweet *Charity's* side.

4

Then kneel at her feet :—it may soothe her disdain:—
The Smile of that Heaven shall forgive thee again.
No ; break, foolish Heart !—perish instantly here :
Too late she will pity, and drop thee a tear.



THEOPHILUS SWIFT.

ERRATA.

Page 27, Line 20—for *ths*, read *this*.

Page 58, Line 24—for *courtly*, read *curtly*.

Page 60, Line 9—for *manaced*, read *menaced*.

Page 68, Line 22—for *surprise*, read *surprised*.

Page 99, Line 10 and 11—for *of of plain-speaking*, read
of plain-speaking.







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